

Hafa Adai!

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Less than 300 working on IPI project

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC informed the Commonwealth Casino Commission that less than 300 individuals have been working at the Imperial Pacific Resort construction site.

This development is concerning for the Commonwealth Casino Commission especially with the projected date of completion of the resort hotel.

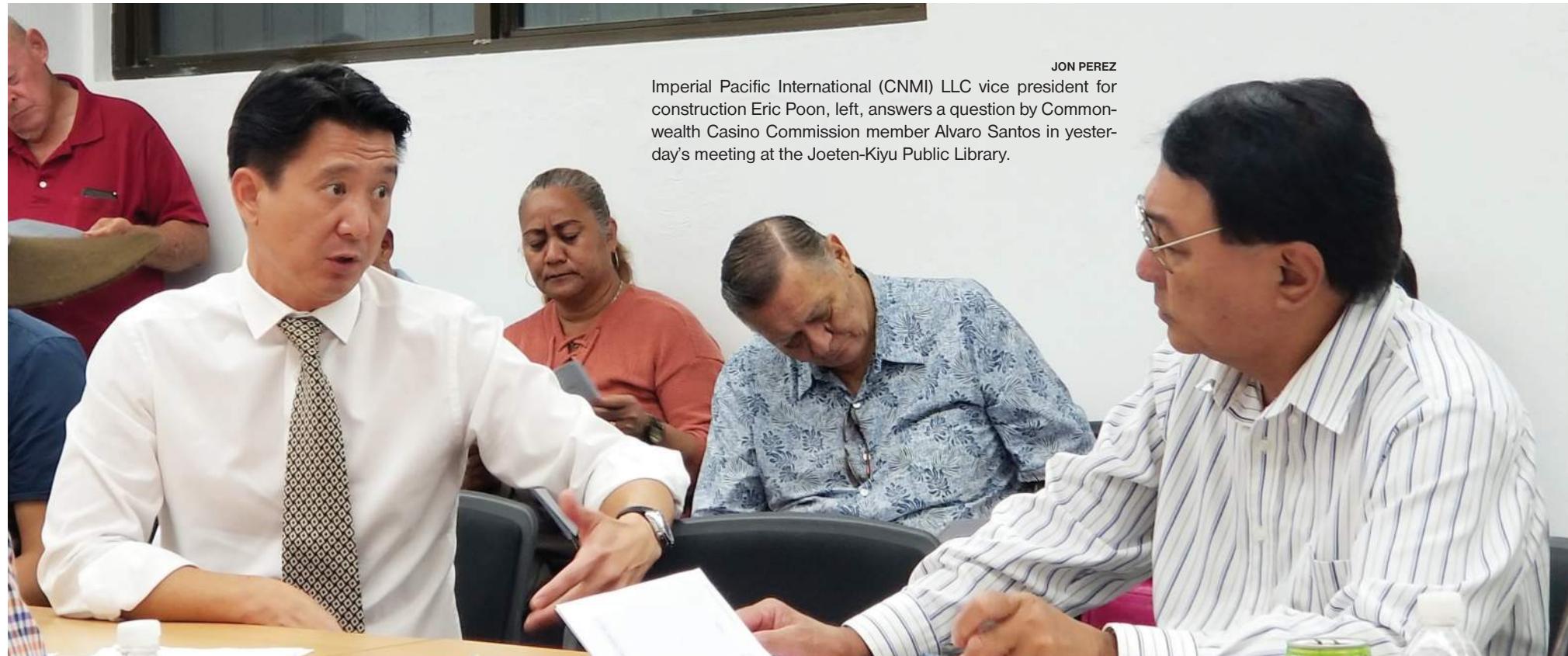
CCC executive director Edward Deleon Guerrero told IPI officials that they should provide monthly progress reports to the commission.

“Because all the facilities need to be new. Public Law 18-56 said that it has to be new and you can’t buy an existing hotel”

“For gaming, it requires a new facility and an amendment was only allowed for Mariana Resort & Spa. It is critical to continue to update the commission.”

Imperial Pacific vice president for construction Eric Poon Poon, in his report to the CCC in yester-

See IPI on Page 4



‘Federal govt needs to understand territories’

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres said policies and other regulations that the U.S. federal government adopted have had an adverse effect to its territories, making it as an additional chal-



Torres

lenge to communities like the CNMI. He testified on Tuesday in a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee hearing chaired by Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

Murkowski, who introduced S. 2325 or the Northern Mariana Islands

U.S. Workforce Act last year, called for the hearing to examine the situation of the five territories—especially with the CNMI, Guam, and Puerto Rico recovering after being hit by destructive typhoons in the last 18 months.

Governors Lou Leon Guerrero (Guam), Ricardo Roselló (Puerto

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INSIDE



LOCAL

The 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival was held on Feb. 16-17, 2019, in the Marianas, offering a pika (spicy) weekend of food, fun, and festivities to visitors and residents.

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NATION

The United Methodist Church faces a likely surge in defections and acts of defiance after delegates voted to strengthen the faith's divisive bans on same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBT clergy.

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FOCUS

The simple house on a street ridden with potholes in this town on Colombia's restive border with Venezuela has become a refuge for the newly homeless.

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Local

Saipan Mayor's Office back to beautifying island

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office yesterday noted that they are officially reverting to their original priorities for Saipan, which is to make the island as presentable as possible for its residents and tourists.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang yesterday told *Saipan Tribune* that they have reverted to prioritizing the beautification of the island since the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu in late October 2018 forced the office to prioritize undertaking cleanup efforts.

"We are back to our regular

operation—we are doing village re-beautification now," Apatang said, adding that teams have started in Koblerville, San Antonio, Chalan Kanoa, and Chalan Piao.

"We are working our way toward the north," he said, specifically noting the Dandan area, San Vicente area, Kag-

man area, and the Capitol Hill area. "We are cleaning the villages along the roads and raking a lot of the trash."

Apatang further noted that he had teams going around and doing bush-cut work around the villages.

Even as they work toward the beautification of the island, the mayor noted that



Apatang

previous beautification projects were affected by the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu.

"There was more debris than we had ever seen," Apatang recalled. "People were throwing out

trash and even though it isn't typhoon-related, they just [dump] it in one place, that's why there are trash flying

around and we are now cleaning those up again," he said.

Saipan Mayor's Office field operations director Joann Aquino further noted that the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality would be issuing a statement soon regarding their enforcement of the 1989 Anti-Littering Act.

According to Aquino, BECQ would go far as to consider fines dependent on the severity of the violation.

Mayor's office collected over 120K cubic yards of Yutu debris

By ERWIN ENCINARES
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REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office yesterday noted that according to their records, they had been able to collect over 120,000 cubic yards of Super Typhoon Yutu debris since starting their cleanup efforts two days right after the super typhoon in late October 2018.

Starting on Oct. 26, 2018, Saipan Mayor's Office director of field operations Joann Aquino told *Saipan Tribune*, that their office was able to collect a total of 121,702 cubic yards of Super Typhoon Yutu debris from the roadside and sent it to the As Gonno staging area for processing.

Aquino noted that the debris collected was a mixture of types of debris, since the Federal Emergency Management Agency noted that the mayor's

office may only pick up debris that are segregated into either green waste or plants, logs, leaves, and trees; construction debris such as lumber, drywall, plywood, concrete, plumbing, carpets, furniture, broken windows, and mattresses; and metal debris such as tin roofing.

The office reached the 100,000 cubic yards of Super Typhoon Yutu debris mark in early February 2019 and just concluded the pick-up program last Feb. 24, 2019 at Afetna. To put into perspective, a mid-sized car is about 5 cubic yards.

According to Saipan Mayor's Office records, they have collected an average of at least 3,000 cubic yards of debris a week and peaked at 11,582 cubic yards of debris collected in January 2019.

Now that the debris collec-

tion is over, Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang noted that his office would not be involved with debris collection and deliver to the As Gonno staging area anymore.

"We still find a lot of debris as we go around," he said, reiterating that his office had been constantly posting deadline dates for the debris collection. "...And yet they continue to put out debris on the road," he said.

"We are not picking up anymore roadside debris. Those people who are putting out household trash need to take it to the landfill," he continued.

Aquino added that the Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality was looking to "strictly enforce" the 1989 Anti-Littering Act, which included fines relative to the degree of violation.

Former cop pleads not guilty for beating girlfriend

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

A former Department of Public Safety police officer pleaded not guilty last Monday to allegedly beating his girlfriend.

Former cop Edward Babauta Pua, 37, pleaded not guilty to all four charges against him. Pua is facing charges for assault and battery (domestic violence), disturbing the peace (domestic violence), criminal mischief, and assault.

Pua was originally charged with kidnapping, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace but the information was amended.

Pua is set for a status conference on March 13 at 9am.

Attorney Rosemond Santos represents Pua, while acting chief prosecutor Heather Barcenas represents the government.

Pua has since posted

\$2,500 of his initial \$25,000 and has been released to his mother who is his third-party custodian.

Pua was arrested for allegedly beating his girlfriend on Valentine's Day because he believed she was having an affair.

According to a police report, last Feb. 14, Pua forced the victim to remain in his car and drove to Marpi. He accused the victim of having an affair and used his right elbow to hit her left temple.

Witnesses at the former Mariana Resort & Spa area—now called the Marianas Base Camp—heard the victim shouting for help.

Police officers said the victim had a swollen face and lips, bruising on her left and right arms, and above her chest.

The victim told police that she was taken by Pua against her will and that he became upset when she refused to give

him her cellphone.

According to the victim, while Pua was driving and punching her head area, she reached for the gear and shifted it, causing the car to slow down. The victim said she was able to steer the wheel to the left, causing it to turn near the entrance to MBC.

She said when the car stopped she got down and began shouting for help and ran toward the entrance.

The victim said she then felt a blow to the back of her head and fell to the ground. Pua told her to get up, but as soon as she got up, she tried to run but her hair was pulled and she ended back on the ground.

While on the ground, the victim said Pua punched her simultaneously with both hands. She said Pua then dragged her back to the car, but she refused until she saw someone with a flashlight and shouted for help.



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ON ALLEGATIONS PRISON GERM-FILLED, UNIFORMS STINKY

Taken as true, OAG says conditions in DOC not inhumane

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Office of the Attorney General said even taken as true an inmate's allegations that the Department of Corrections is "germ-filled" and that their uniforms are stinky, among other complaints, the conditions in the DOC do not appear to be described inhumane or deemed as inadequate shelter under the Eight Amendment.

In a motion to dismiss inmate Jesse James Babauta Camacho's lawsuit, assistant attorney general Hessel Yntema and OAG Civil Division chief Christopher M. Timmons, counsel for defendants CNMI government and DOC officials, asserted that Camacho alleges that DOC is full of germs and that their uniforms are not being washed sufficiently so that it stinks.

Yntema and Timmons said Babauta also alleges that insufficient amounts of hand sanitizers are being provided by the guards and notes that particular disdain for being told that the "air fresheners are for the officers use only."

The lawyers said the U.S. Constitution "does not mandate comfortable prisons and that constitutionally, prison conditions may be "restrictive and even harsh."

Yntema and Timmons said by only stating that things smell and are "germ-filled" in DOC, Camacho has failed to allege a constitutional harm.

"More is needed," the lawyers pointed out.

Yntema and Timmons said other than general unpleasantries, Camacho alleges no real negative effects for the pled lack of sanitation: there are no rashes from lack of gloves; the prison smell is not overpowering.

Instead, Yntema and Timmons said, Camacho simply alleges that the prison is "stinky."

"An occasionally stinky uniform does not an Eight Amendment claim make," they said.

Yntema and Timmons said stinky uniforms and lack of hand sanitizers does not implicate the "wanton and unnecessary infliction of pain" standard required for an Eighth Amendment claim.

The lawyers said Camacho states that there are neither doctor nor nurses in the DOC.

They said as a matter of public record, DOC does not have a doctor on staff

and instead, inmates are regularly taken to the Commonwealth hospital for their regular checkups.

Yntema and Timmons said Camacho does not claim a denial of medical treatment by DOC or its officers.

"This again, it not an actionable constitutional harm; there is no mandate to have physician in house at detention facilities," the lawyers added.

Yntema and Timmons said Camacho failed to provide any facts or allegations related to 11 of the previously named defendants.

They said the complaint mentions no dates and jumps around incoherently between multiple allegations, some of which are unactionable.

They said the court should dismiss from the case DOC officials/officers Georgia Cabrera, Jose K. Pangelinan, Pius Yaroitemal, Frances Rebuenog, Frederick Billy, Benjamin Lizama, David Wabol, Abraham Reyes, Nardson Ambalan, Sensiny Matsurato, Anthony Malwelbug, Romeo Herman, and the CNMI.

Ruling that DOC lacks the capacity to sue or be sued, the federal court recently dismissed DOC as a party from this lawsuit.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona ordered that the CNMI government is substituted in DOC's place as one of the defendants.

Citing that they cannot be sued for damages under Section 1983 and that Camacho did not request any prospective relief in his lawsuit, Manglona, however, also dismissed his complaint against the CNMI government and all DOC officials and officers that he sued in their official capacity.

Section 1983 is the statute that creates a remedy for violations of federal rights committed by persons acting under color of state law.

Camacho sued in their official capacity four defendants—DOC director of Civil Division Georgia Cabrera, the late Lieutenant Frances Rebuenog, Corrections Officer III Lorraine Rios, and Corrections Officer 3 Benjamin Lizama.

Manglona dismissed with prejudice Camacho's complaint against defendants he sued in their personal capacity as to the events that occurred prior to and on Sept. 1, 2017.

Dismiss with prejudice means the inmate can no lon-



Yntema



Timmons



Manglona

ter the doctor diagnosed his heart attack.

Dismiss without prejudice means Camacho can re-file the claims against the personal capacity defendants.

Manglona allowed Camacho to amend his complaint, limited to adding more facts to support his claims against the remaining personal capacity defendants for deliberate indifference to his serious medical condition after

Sept. 1, 2017.

Camacho then filed the second amended complaint.

Camacho filed a pro se or without a lawyer a handwritten complaint. He has claimed that he is now a disabled person after he underwent a heart surgery in November 2017. He blamed a DOC official and a DOC officer for allegedly causing the delay of his medical treatment.

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IT&E

Las Vegas Night '18 finalized

By ERWIN ENCINARES
erwin_encinaires@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Rotary Club of Saipan's largest annual fundraiser has been finalized and will be held at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan on March 30 and fea-

tures a 2019 Mitsubishi as its grand prize.

The Rotary Club at its weekly membership meeting last Tuesday at the Hyatt Regency Saipan announced that as of Tuesday, Las Vegas Night 2018 tickets would officially be sold

after they finally secured their gambling permit from the Attorney General's Office.

The event, which is slated to be held at the Fiesta Resort on Saturday, March 30, 2019, from 6pm to 12am, features a 2019 Mitsubishi Mirage G4 or \$10,000 as its grand prize.

The second prize is \$3,000,

third is \$2,000, fourth is \$1,000, and fifth is \$500. There are also door prizes available.

Rotary Club vice president Brian Clayton noted that tickets may be bought from any member of the local Rotary Club, at Megabyte Saipan, at the McDonald's Saipan headquarters in Dandan, and at the

[U.S.] citizens living in the CNMI by seeking out new and innovative solutions that conformed to our unique circumstances."

He added that DoD and FEMA, a week after the disaster, introduced TETRIS, or the Temporary Emergency Tent and Roofing Installation Support program, to help individuals that lost their homes from the tornado-like winds of Yutu.

"Under TETRIS, the Joint Task Force West, saw more than 1,000 uniformed service members mobilized in support of the relief efforts. Seabees from the 30th Naval Construction Regiment and the 254th Red Horse Squadron were activated in the hundreds to support the installation of tents and emergency roof repairs for the thousands of affected homes because local manpower and resources could not scale in the capacity necessary to prevent further loss of life, mitigate suffering and reduce the impact of the disaster," said Torres.

"In this situation, the prohibition of CW-1 positions for new construction workers combined with the federal government's position that the majority of construction contractors are ineligible to source their labor through the H-2B process, will result in fewer safe and sanitary homes in the CNMI."

He said the wide-ranging implications on issues such as socioeconomic mobility, education, and health in the CNMI is a great concern. "Down the road this will require even greater federal resources to support these families. In my time, I had to lead my islands through two once-in-a-generation natural disasters."

"It is not a question of if another disaster devastates our islands, but when. This will happen again, and without the presence of construction labor to rebuild resilient homes, the cost to the federal government will be greater and greater in the years to come."

He added the CNMI's limited access to labor has caused the federal government more. "Already the cost of policies limiting access to construction labor has increased the cost to the federal government for disaster recovery."

Federal partners

Torres then thanked all federal agencies that helped them after the disaster. "After Typhoon Yutu, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the U.S. Department of Defense recognized the challenges of performing their work for the

Torres said FEMA has also approved a Permanent Housing Construction Program, where they would construct new typhoon-resilient homes to eligible individuals. "Currently there are 9,400 applicants for this program and FEMA is in the process of looking toward bringing in labor from outside the CNMI because of the lack of local manpower. The homes that are selected will be fortunate."

"Now, as FEMA and SBA resources have been released to the residents of the CNMI, the thousands of homes remaining will not be able to afford the cost of transporting labor nor will there be available contractors to help rebuild their lives. The DoD and FEMA have experienced the challenges we live with daily when it comes to labor and have created new pathways to work around them."

along with Torres in relation with H.R. 560 introduced by Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP).

H.R. 560, if it becomes a law, would provide improved status to long-term foreign workers that have called the CNMI their second home for years.

sion on what projects the proceeds would go towards.

"We still have the repair of the Garapan Skate Park, the repair of the Kagman Family Park, and we have been approached by the American Memorial Park also to put something up there," he said.

With all the planning, Clayton noted that the projects are easily determined once they actually had the proceeds of the event on-hand.

"We actually have to see the proceeds that we end up raising from the Las Vegas Night but it looks like we are going to end up doing another park project—that seems to be the most critical [project]," he said.

current labor situation. "You only have 226 workers, is this forecast accurate based on your issue? Are you still confident that it can be completed by December 2019?"

Despite their workforce issues, Poon said they are still looking at the projected date of completion while also hoping that their labor problem would improve. "We hope things won't get any worse; we're hoping we can get H-2B [skilled] workers from Philippines back as soon as possible."

"[But], it depends on the approval of the U.S. [federal] government and we are also working with the CNMI government closely with this," said Poon, who added that local officials know that they need the skilled workers to finish the construction project.

He said they are looking to get more workers in other countries that are still eligible for the H-2B visa program. "We're looking for more workers and try to meet the deadline forecast that we have. The current H-2B workers are focused on the resort hotel—the rooms and corridors—and within the 226 we have painters, carpenters, and welders."

"Those [workers] are focused on the area, which is part of Phase 1, the resort hotel. Obviously, if we have more workers, that would be great and we could move the project more forward. What we have now, we try to achieve with that number."

CCC vice chair Joe Reyes suggested that IPI should look into skilled workers from other countries like India and Mongolia after he had a friend tap laborers from the said countries for a construction project in Diego Garcia.

business community.

The CNMI delegation will also have separate meetings with officials from the U.S. Department of Labor, Department of Commerce, and Department of Homeland Security on workforce and tourism issues in the Commonwealth.

FEDERAL

From Page 1

Rico), and Albert Bryan (U.S. Virgin Islands) joined Torres in testifying in the committee hearing. American Samoa Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga failed to attend and just submitted a written testimony.

Torres thanked Murkowski and the other members of the Senate committee, like ranking Joe Manchin (D-WV), in calling for the meeting as it recognizes the important conversation on the priorities of U.S. territories. "Many of the issues facing the territories today are unique to us. We all fight against issues of geography. Limited land mass, natural resource scarcity, distance from the U.S., and important reliance are key among these issues."

"We face labor challenges, where our locations, economies, outward migration and population sizes are not suitable to build resiliency or strength in a globally competitive market. But I believe most important among these issues is our continual struggle to gain the federal government's understanding of the complexity of achieving substantial progress for the people living in the territories."

He added that the CNMI was grateful for the efforts made by Murkowski in organizing and encouraging Congressional Delegation visits to the CNMI, which gives the chance for members of U.S. Congress to see and hear firsthand the issues that affect the territories like the Commonwealth.

"Many of the challenges we face are difficult to comprehend if one does not travel the 8,000 miles across the Pacific Ocean to experience it for themselves. Efforts such as these are critical when federal laws have such over-sized effects on the fragile state of the U.S. territories," said Torres.

He added that territories, unlike the 50 states, have limited powers in U.S. Congress and have no voice in choosing the next leader of the country

but suffer from policies and other regulations implemented by the federal government.

"Territories, while not having full representation in our House of Representatives, no direct representation in the U.S. Senate, and are unable to cast a vote for president, suffer the harshest side effects of the unintended consequences of federal actions that do not account for the vulnerability our communities," said Torres.

Recovering from Yutu

Torres, who won a fresh four-year mandate, also informed the committee that one of his administration's priority right now is to help the community recover from the devastation brought by Super Typhoon Yutu, which hit the islands of Saipan and Tinian in October last year.

"While I have many goals for the next four years in office, I must be honest in recognizing the greatest obstacles toward improving the lives of the people of the CNMI are the actions of the federal government. One of my most urgent priorities is the rebuilding of safe and resilient homes that were destroyed by Super Typhoon Yutu last October," he said.

"Super Typhoon Yutu was the worst typhoon to hit U.S. soil since 1935. According to damage assessments performed by the American Red Cross 5,910 homes were destroyed or suffered major damage after the disaster last year. Nearly four out of every 10 homes on island were impacted by this disaster at a time where available housing 2 stocks were already at capacity."

Torres then discussed the H-2B issue involving the CNMI and Guam, and the challenges they face after the U.S. Department of Homeland Security removed the Philippines from the list of countries that are eligible to avail of the said visa program last month. CNMI and Guam employers use the H-2B visa to hire skilled, especially from the Philippines.

He said the H-2B is critical for the CNMI right now, as homes and other infrastructure need repairs and rebuild-

Islands) also testified. American Samoa Gov. Lolo Matalasi Moliga failed to attend and just submitted a written testimony.

NMBAC members were part of the CNMI delegation that was led by Torres and they attended legislative hearings and met officials from the

ing, since the current CW-1 [CNMI-Only Transitional Worker] program prevents workers in the construction trades to avail the said visa category.

"These homes will require rebuilding and new construction to maintain the safety and security of their families, yet the availability of construction labor to do this necessary and critical work has been limited by federal actions preventing construction companies' access to the necessary foreign labor through the H-2B program," said Torres.

"In this situation, the prohibition of CW-1 positions for new construction workers combined with the federal government's position that the majority of construction contractors are ineligible to source their labor through the H-2B process, will result in fewer safe and sanitary homes in the CNMI."

He said the wide-ranging implications on issues such as socioeconomic mobility, education, and health in the CNMI is a great concern. "Down the road this will require even greater federal resources to support these families. In my time, I had to lead my islands through two once-in-a-generation natural disasters."

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NMBAC

From Page 1

tee hearing to examine the state of the U.S. territories where Governors Lou Leon Guerrero (Guam), Ricardo Roselló (Puerto Rico), and Albert Bryan (U.S. Virgin

Kilili: Torres should use his Trump connections

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) is again urging Gov. Ralph DLG Torres to use his direct connection to President Donald J. Trump to enable Sablan's two immigration-related bills about the CNMI to move forward.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has removed the Philippines from the eligibility of using the H-2B visa, while U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services discontinued the CNMI parole program.

In response, Sablan introduced two measures—H.R. 559 or the Northern Mariana Islands Long-Term Legal Residents Relief Act and H.R. 560 or the NMI Residents Relief Act—to help affected CNMI residents.

H.R. 559 hopes to address the issue of legal workers under the CNMI parole program, while H.R. 560 aims to give improved status to long-term guest workers.

"He [Torres] is a friend of the Trump administration and I'm not. So, I encourage him to do everything that he can to solve this [CNMI labor and immigration issues]. If

he needs to see the President, then he should. He needs to see as many people as he can under the Trump administration," Sablan said.

H.R. 559—if it becomes law—would help solve the problem of spouses and immediate relatives of citizens of Freely Associated States and spouses or IRs of U.S. citizens; parents of U.S. citizen children who are under and over 21 years old; CNMI permanent residents, and stateless individuals.

Sablan also clarified that individuals who are under the E-2C CNMI-Only visas are no longer included in H.R. 559. "I am working hard to get DHS to agree to allow me to include them since they are currently also here on humanitarian parole. I still have a few days to work on this matter for the others who are covered in H.R. 559 and the bigger group of CW workers in H.R. 560."

He added that he managed to reach a compromise in the previous U.S. Congress that resulted in the passage of H.R. 339 that became U.S. Public Law 115-53. That added 2,002 slots to the cap on the CNMI-Only transitional visa, while H.R. 5956 was signed into PL. 115-218 that extended the

program up to 2029. "I was able to do those before, but now? I don't think so. I am sorry for that."

Sablan is confident that the House would pass an immigration bill. "We will pass something in the House and would like to see that it covers everybody. If not, then we will cover those that are urgent and continue to work on the rest. There are so many things going on that I'm focused on and this is just one [immigration] item. I want to focus on the others since they are also important to our

community and our islands."

Committee hearing

Sablan will help preside over a House Natural Resources Committee hearing on Feb. 27 (early Thursday morning in the CNMI) for his H.R. 559 to examine the status of those under the CNMI categorical parole that remain in limbo after the decision of the Trump administration to discontinue the program last year.

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Northern Marianas Business Alliance Corp. president Michael S. Sablan, who is

also Triple J's Finance and Administration vice president, are among those who will be testifying before the committee.

U.S. Department of the Interior-Office of Insular Affairs direct Nickolao Pula, Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, and U.S. Government Accountability Office-International Affairs and Trade director Dr. David B. Goettick are the other witnesses.

Torres, Triple J's Sablan, and the other witnesses would provide the House committee information on why those who

are under the CNMI categorical parole need to be given legal resident status.

Some of the people under this group, who are called stateless, were born in the CNMI after local officials chose to become a U.S. territory but before the islands were legally accepted as a commonwealth.

Former president Barack Obama offered humanitarian parole for these stateless individuals to legally stay in the CNMI. Their status does not grant them the right to travel to the U.S. mainland.



US SENATE HEARING

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, rightmost, poses with Sen. Lisa Murkowski, second from right, chairwoman of the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; Delegate Aumua Amata Radewagen, leftmost; Puerto Rico Gov. Ricardo Rosello, second from left, U.S. Virgin Islands Gov. Albert Bryan, third from left, and Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero, third from right, following the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources hearing on the state of U.S. territories.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MVA Rota giant sign ready for installation; lines up several projects to attract tourists

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority has several ongoing destination enhancement projects to attract tourists on Rota, including a giant destination sign that is ready for installation.



Concepcion

MVA managing director Christopher Concepcion said yesterday that the giant Rota destination sign is similar to the huge signs that they've installed on Saipan and Tinian.

Concepcion said the Rota sign has a different design.

MVA is waiting for the Department of Public Lands to authorize the installation on roadside public land.

"We expect to receive approval next month," the managing director said.

He also disclosed that they are renovating the Bird Sanctuary, Mount Sabana Peace Memorial, and working on Mount Sabana 360 project with Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig.

Concepcion said they brought in TV company SBS from South Korea to film the *Law of the Jungle* real-

Concepcion said one participant in this familiarization trip is famous Instagram model and blogger Valeria Shapovalova, who has over 100,000 followers.

Concepcion said they also hosted a digital influencer familiarization from South Korea a few months ago to promote Bisita Luta and the Rota fiesta.

"Their work was published in *Travie* magazine, a popular travel magazine in Korea," he said.

Concepcion disclosed that next week they have KBS TV company going to Rota to film a TV show called *Live Information* which will highlight the island's historic sites.

KBS TV will also cover the Saipan Marathon.

MVA hosts or co-hosts the Rota Cliff Fishing Derby, Rota Coconut Festival, Rota Sweet Potato Festival, Rota Fiesta, Rota Coffee Fun Run, and other smaller events.

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Allegedly unpaid candies land police officer in court

A police officer has been charged with theft for allegedly stealing candy bars and drinks at a Shell gas station in Susupe. Koji Maurice N. Taisacan, 29, was summoned to appear before the Superior Court last Monday for an arraignment.

He pleaded not guilty.

If found guilty, Taisacan faces a maximum sentence of one year and a \$1,000 fine.

CCA re-elects four board members, officers

The Commonwealth Cancer Association announced yesterday the re-election of four members to the CCA board of directors: Nora R. Sablan, Cesar Dumatal, Malua T. Peter, and Alicia DLG Guerrero. They were all re-elected to new two-year terms. The election took place at the meeting of the CCA board on Jan. 17, 2019, at the CCA conference room in Gualo Rai.

A separate election for CCA officers was held on Feb. 19, 2019, which saw the re-election of Roman "Bo" T. Palacios as president, the re-election of Nora R. Sablan to serve as vice president, the re-election of Tina Marie M. Aguon as secre-

tary, and the re-election of Cesar Dumatal as treasurer.

The CCA began as an alliance of volunteers in 2003 and became formally chartered and incorporated in 2008. In 2009, CCA achieved a tax-exempt status under 501 (c)(3) and since then has been providing direct client financial assistance for qualifying assistance such as nutritional supplements and other personal needs, and offers certain types of medical equipment, e.g., hospital beds, wheelchairs, oxygen concentrator, etc. as prescribed by a licensed physician in the CNMI to those individuals who are receiving

treatment for cancer.

CCA also facilitates monthly cancer survivors support group meetings, and engages in various awareness and outreach activities and has produced various educational publications such as brochures, fliers and DVDs for our diverse community.

CCA organizes community events such as cervical cancer, oral cancer, colorectal cancer, breast cancer, prostate cancer, and lung and pancreatic cancer awareness, to mention a few. CCA also engages in programs such as early screening and detection, and patient navigation. CCA has partnered

AMP marks NEA 'Big Read' with baseball book

Pacific Historic Parks continues its National Endowment for the Arts Big Read celebration of *When the Emperor was Divine* by Julie Otsuka with a read aloud of *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki.

The program will take place on Saturday, March 2, 2019, at 10am at the American Memorial Park Visitor Center.

The program is open to children ages 5-10, and registration

is required. This program is presented in partnership with the National Park Service and the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library. The read-aloud invites children to be part of the NEA Big Read program.

The March 2 program entails reading of a picture book that helps to share the experiences of Japanese-Americans who were forced to relocate from their home to internment camps

during World War II. This moving story of hope, change and courage brings history to life, taking readers to an unfamiliar time. The program will include fun activities to help children to connect to the story.

The program begins at 10am and ends at 11:30am. Those interested in registering can email Nataline Kaneshi at nkaneshi@pacifichistoricparks.org or stop by the American Memorial Park

Visitor Center to fill out the registration form. Note that slots for the program are limited.

A national initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts in partnership with Arts Midwest, the NEA Big Read broadens our understanding of our world, our communities, and ourselves through the joy of sharing a good book.

For more information on this program, please contact Jovannalyn Mafnas at email address: jmafnas@pacifichistoricparks.org. (PR)

drinks having a value of less than \$250 from a Shell gas station in Susupe without paying for the items on June 12, 2018. The gas station is owned by Delta Management.

Superior Court Presid-

ing Judge Roberto Naraja appointed the Office of the Public Defender to represent Taisacan while acting chief prosecutor Heather Barcina appeared for the government. (Kimberly A. Bautista)

Meeting set for SHRM certification exam

The Discussion Group to help prepare for the spring SHRM certification exam will have its first meeting this Saturday, March 2, at 10am. This meeting and the future weekly meetings will be held in the HR Support CNMI training room on the second floor of the J's Restaurant building on Middle Road, Gualo Rai.

There will be weekly meetings to review and discuss the content of the SHRM Learning System. This Saturday will allow the participants of this year's test-taking group to meet each other

and to determine the best day and time for the meetings.

It's best to sign up for the test as soon as possible, so you have more choices in your test date (May-June-July). You must be an SHRM member and be taking the exam in order to participate in the discussion group. There is no fee for the discussion group and the training materials will be provided by the NMI SHRM Chapter.

Contact Frank Gibson at shrmnmichapter@gmail.com or by phone at 287-7476 to confirm your participation. (PR)

NMC info session tonight

Individuals who are interested in furthering their education are encouraged to attend Northern Marianas College's free information session tonight, Feb. 28. In addition to the admission process, college personnel will

all talk about financial aid options that are available for the spring 2019 semester.

The info session will be held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at NMC's Olympio T. Borja Library at the college's As Terlaje campus.

Attendees will qualify to have their application fee

wedged for NMC's upcoming spring 2019 semester, a savings of about \$75.

The first day of classes will be

on April 1, 2019, but interested applicants are encouraged to apply early to register for courses

and for financial aid.

For more information about registering for classes for the upcoming spring 2019 semester or to apply for admission, contact the NMC Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768/6769/6771 or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-19-013

AGINGAN PRIMARY SCREEN PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for the attainment of a Primary Screen for the Agingan Wastewater Treatment Plant at CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-work will be emailed to all registered prospective proposers email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-19-013, Agingan Primary Screen Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 21, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A *Proposal Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: <https://marianaslabor.net/>. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 7, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Western Knudsen, P.E., Senior Engineer for Water/Wastewater at email address western.knudsen@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrative Technician, Senior at email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
Office of the Executive Director

EMERGENCY REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
CUC-RFP-19-014

SADOG TASI PRIMARY SCREEN PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director for the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from qualified vendors for the attainment of a Primary Screen for the Sadog Tasi Wastewater Treatment Plant at CUC Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The RFP Package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays, upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 (non-refundable) for one RFP package set. The RFP package consisting of the specifications and scope-of-work will be emailed to all registered prospective proposers email ID. Prospective Proposers must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division.

One (1) original and four (5) hard copies, along with an electronic copy of the proposal on a compact disk or USB Drive in PDF format must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-RFP-19-014, Sadog Tasi Primary Screen Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **March 22, 2019 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

A *Proposal Guarantee* of fifteen (15%) percent of the total proposal price must accompany the proposals. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or proposal bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful Proposer. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Proposers are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

Discussions may be conducted with responsible offerors who submit proposals determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. Offerors shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity to discussion and revision of proposals, and such revision may be permitted after submission and prior to award for the purpose of obtaining the best and final offers. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from proposals submitted by competing offerors.

All Offeror are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the Offeror due to lack of information or understanding of the proposal requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a proposal or supply under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the proposal under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Offeror are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

All responses to this RFP should take into account any and all taxes, including excise tax, which will become the obligation of the proponent awarded a contract. Successful proponents will be required to submit a copy of a valid CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less than the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page: <https://marianaslabor.net/>. The proponents shall be required to comply with all applicable CNMI and Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on March 8, 2019** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator at email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Western Knudsen, P.E., Senior Engineer for Water/Wastewater at email address western.knudsen@cucgov.org and Christie Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrative Technician, Senior at email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Education bill includes \$350M for insular areas

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Islands schools will get \$350 million for physical and digital infrastructure under the “Rebuild America’s Schools Act,” which cleared the House Committee on Education and Labor yesterday. Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) voted in favor of the bill and it was approved out of the committee, 26-20.

H.R. 865, the “Rebuild America’s Schools Act,” invests more than \$100 billion in America’s public schools. According to economic projections, the bill would also create more than 1.9 million good-paying jobs across the country.

“Countless students attend school in crumbling buildings

that are either unsafe, lacking in essential resources, or both,” said Sablan, who chairs the House Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education. “The Rebuild America’s School’s Act is an important step toward ensuring that every student, regardless of their family’s wealth, can attend a safe and high-quality public school.”

The bill reserves \$350 million over the next decade for the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, American Samoa and the U.S. Virgin Islands. This will help address the particular need for school repair and rebuilding in the U.S. insular areas. Even before Typhoon Mangkhut and Super Typhoon

Yutu struck the Marianas and Hurricanes Irma and Maria hit the Virgin Islands, the U.S. Army of Engineers estimated the cost of deferred maintenance at island schools at \$177 million.

Sablan amendments

H.R. 865 contains three provisions authored by Sablan. One amendment requires the \$350 million set-aside for island schools to be allocated in proportion to each insular area’s funding level under

Title I-A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. The change prevents a situation that Sablan fixed in 2015 which had federal funding levels for insular areas determined at the discretion of the Secretary of Education as opposed to the poverty-based formula used for states.

Another Sablan amendment expanded the required study and report on the physical condition of schools to include the Marianas and other territories, in addition to the states and the

District of Columbia.

Sablan also got the bill changed to ensure island schools can access the technical assistance provided by the information clearinghouse that the Secretary of Education is required to set up. The clearinghouse will disseminate information to schools on financing for green projects.

A win-win proposition

“For far too long, students, parents, and teachers have felt the consequences of our chronic

failure to prioritize funding for public education. The Rebuild America’s Schools Act would provide targeted support to improve unsafe and under-resourced schools across the country,” said Education and Labor Committee chair Rep. Bobby Scott at the markup.

“The Rebuild America’s Schools Act would create more jobs than the recent Republican \$1.5 trillion tax bill, at just 5 percent of the cost. This legislation is good for students, good for educators, good for our communities, and good for the economy.” (PR)



ETC DONATION

Kevin C. Guerrero, third from right, owner and president of Priority Care Services, recently made an education tax credit contribution to Mount Carmel School. Guerrero stopped by the school with Eliza Mendoza, assistant general manager, third from left, to present the contribution to school president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, second from right, who was joined by seniors Angelo Manese, far left, Reica Ramirez, second from left, and Justin Ocampo, far right. Deleon Guerrero thanked Guerrero for the contribution, which he said will go toward continuing recovery efforts from Super Typhoon Yutu.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

PERSONAL MILESTONE

Han named to Boston U's dean's list

Daniel Han, a resident of Saipan, has recently been named to the dean’s list at Boston University for the fall semester. Each school and college at Boston University has their own criterion for the dean’s list, but students generally must attain a 3.5 grade point average (on a 4.0 scale), or be in the top 30 percent of their class, as well as a full course load as a full-time student. (PR)

Salvosa makes it to Seton Hall U's dean's list

Chloe Hazel Anne Salvosa of Saipan has qualified for the fall 2018 dean’s list at Seton Hall University. After the close of every semester, undergraduate students completing all courses with a GPA of 3.4, with no grades lower than “C”, qualify for the dean’s list. (PR)

Federal Contracting Bootcamp Part 1

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 @ 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Tinian Public Library



Presented by:

Boris Hertslet, Program Manager

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Disclaimer: The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) at the University of Guam – School of Business & Public Administration is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, please contact Lorie Pangilinan, P.O. Box 5795 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, and Tel: (670)664-3018, or Email lorie@pacificsbdc.com. Services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.

Federal Contracting Bootcamp Part 2

Tuesday, March 5, 2019 @ 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

Tinian Public Library



Presented by:

Boris Hertslet, Program Manager

Each year, the federal government awards hundreds of billions of dollars in federal contracts to business to meet the needs of federal agencies and the military. This training will cover the steps needed in order to do business with the federal government:

- FedBizOpps
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Register at <https://pisbdcn.ecenterdirect.com/events/4325>

For more information, contact the CNMI SBDC at 664-3018 or www.pacificsbdc.com.

Disclaimer: The Pacific Islands Small Business Development Center Network (PISBDCN) at the University of Guam – School of Business & Public Administration is partially funded by a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). All opinions, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the SBA. Requests for reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities will be made if requested at least two weeks in advance. Language assistance services are available for limited English proficient individuals with at least two weeks advance notice. For arrangements, please contact Lorie Pangilinan, P.O. Box 5795 CHRB, Saipan, MP 96950, and Tel: (670)664-3018, or Email lorie@pacificsbdc.com. Services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis.

Tinian shows recovery at Hot Pepper Festival

The 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival was held on Feb. 16-17, 2019, in the Marianas, offering a *pika* (spicy) weekend of food, fun, and festivities to visitors and residents.

Held in honor of the island's

small but famously potent *donni sali* (hot pepper), the festival was held at picture-perfect Kammer Beach and was a welcomed reboot for the island following Super Typhoon Yutu.

"It's a wonderful feeling for all partners to have come together and make the Tinian Hot Pepper Festival another success this year, despite the unique challenges the island has faced since Super Typhoon Yutu five months ago," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Christopher A. Concepcion. "The venue next to the historic House of Taga at beautiful Kammer Beach was perfect, food vendors provided a wide variety of delicious options, and sponsors were just as enthusiastic as ever. The MVA is pleased to have once again partnered with the Tinian Mayor's Office, Tinian Municipal Council, and the Tinian community to put on this fantastic event for visitors."

The festival included live entertainment, indigenous craft sales, and a variety of contests. Although some hotel rooms were damaged by Yutu, dozens of visitors took advantage of the opportunity to camp at the beach next to the

crystal-clear sea.

In his welcoming remarks, Mayor Edwin Aldan noted the similarity between the re-growth of *donni sali* and the rebound of the community after the devastation of Yutu.

"Just like *donni sali* is resilient, the people of Tinian are resilient," Aldan said.

Contest winners walked away with cash and other prizes over the weekend. The title of Hot Pepper Eating Contest champion went to Kirk Johns of the U.S., who successfully downed rounds of local pepper, Korean red pepper, Thai pepper, Habanero pepper, Jalapeno pepper, Serrano pepper, fresh *donni sali*, and ground *donni sali* before wiping out his competition in the final round. Retaining her tasty title from 2018, Mikicia of Tinian was judged the best in the *Katdon Pika* (spicy stew) Cooking Contest. JC Cafe Pika Burger Eating Contest awarded high school student Manual Quitugua for downing a double burger and fries laced with hot pepper. The "Mwar"-Making Contest awarded Arsene Borja for the best flower head lei. Vladislav Melnik of Saipan downed the most number of wings 30—in 15 minutes to win the Pika Wing Eating Contest.

Exclusive sponsor IT&E provided Samsung J6 Pro phones and three months free service as prizes for several contests.

Matua Villagomez won the kids' *umang* (hermit crab) race with his fast-moving crab, and prizes were also awarded for a Cha Cha Dance Off.

Marking 15 years of the festival, the MVA introduced "Pika" as the official mascot of the festival.

Winners of the 65K Pika Bike Race on Feb. 16 were also awarded at the festival. Participants were provided free trans-

portation from Saipan aboard the ferry shuttle.

Two sailing canoes also travelled from Saipan to Tinian for the event.

The Tinian Hot Pepper Festival is held every Presidents Day weekend in February. (PR)



MVA

The 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival opening ceremony kicked off on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas. The festival is held every Presidents Day weekend.



MVA

Competitors in the JC Café Pika Burger Eating Contest take their first bites at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.



MVA

Natasha Tomokane, center, and Miss Marianas Celine Cabrera, left, and other judges sample entries in the Katdon Pika Cooking Contest at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.



MVA

Tinian Jr./Sr. High JROTC cadets serve at the JC Café Pika Burger Eating Contest at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.



MVA

Manual Quitugua of Tinian wins the JC Café Pika Burger Eating Contest at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.



MVA

Taga Dance Academy Cultural Dancers perform at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION FOR BIDS DPW/VAO19-IFB-009

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 12, 2019 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"CONSTRUCTION FOR THE CNMI VETERANS CEMETARY EXPANSION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT FOR THE OFFICE OF GRANTS MANAGEMENT. A PROJECT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT PACIFIC QUICK PRINT & POST, LOCATED IN MIDDLE ROAD, GARAPAN, SAIPAN. A FEE WILL BE ASSESSED BY PACIFIC QUICK PRINT FOR COPIES OF THE IFB DOCUMENTS.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS IFB MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO **MR. ANTONY A. CAMACHO, DIRECTOR OF DPW/TSD** VIA FACSIMILE TO (670) 234-3547 **NO LATER THAN THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS 04:30 P.M., MARCH 26, 2019**. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS.

A **PRE-BID CONFERENCE** IS SCHEDULED NO LATER THAN **09:00 A.M. LOCAL TIME, APRIL 02, 2019** AT THE OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR'S CONFERENCE ROOM 1ST FLOOR, CAPITOL HILL, JUAN A. SABLAN MEMORIAL BUILDING, SAIPAN. THE PROSPECTIVE BIDDERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO FAMILIARIZE THEMSELVES WITH THE SITE.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ EPIPHANIO E. CABRERA, JR.
ADMINISTRATOR, OFFICE OF GRANTS

/S/ JOSEPH A. TUDELA
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

TINIAN CASINO GAMING CONTROL COMMISSION

Municipality of Tinian and Aguijan
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Casino Gaming Control Commission (TCGCC) hereby gives notice that it will hold a Special Meeting on Friday, March 1, 2019, at 9:00 a.m. at the TCGCC Hearing Room.

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY
 - a.) Call to Order
 - b.) Roll Call
 - c.) Adoption of Agenda
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS¹
- III. NEW BUSINESS
 - a.) Executive Director's Contract
- IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION²
- V. MISCELLANEOUS/
ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS
- VI. ADJOURNMENT

¹Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments.

²Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Commission may vote to meet in executive session at any time.



"Donni sali" (hot pepper) is the inspiration for the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival held every Presidents Day weekend in February in the Marianas.



"Pika" is introduced at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas as the official festival mascot.



A family picks up lunch from S-Mart Barbecue at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.



The 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas was held at Kammer Beach, suitable for sailing, swimming, snorkeling, beach volleyball, camping, and other activities.



MVA

From left, second place Tyce Mister, first place Joel Buko, and third place Mark Isip, all of Saipan, celebrate their winning finish in the 65K Pika Bike Race, held on Feb. 16, 2019, in conjunction with the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival in the Marianas.



Didi San Nicolas of Tinian, left, sells hot pepper paste, power, and other items at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.

From left, Tinian Municipal Council's Patrick Manglona, emcee Rep. L.J. Castro, and Tinian Mayor Edwin Aldan toast with Pika Pale Ale at the 15th Annual Tinian Hot Pepper Festival on Feb. 16, 2019, in the Marianas.

MVA



Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands Office of the Secretary of Public Works

2nd Floor Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan, MP 96950



INVITATION FOR BIDS DPW19-IFB-008

ROUTE 34 (KAGMAN ROAD) REPAIR

Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Department of Public Works (DPW) are soliciting sealed bids for Route 34 (Kagman Road) Repair, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI).

The project package will be available on or after **February 28, 2019** at Technical Services Division, Department of Public Works, located on Second Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, San Jose, Saipan. A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at the DPW Technical Services Division.

All interested bidders are also required to include Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC can be obtained at the Department of Commerce/Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations currently in effect."

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITUES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **March 19, 2019**, 9:00 a.m. local time at the Department of Public Works Conference Room 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center Office, Saipan. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **March 28, 2019** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

Prospective bidders should examine and review the invitation for bids with care. If it should appear to a prospective bidder that the performance of the work under the contract or any of the matter relative thereto is not sufficiently described or explained in the invitation for bids, or that any discrepancy exists between different parts of the invitation for bids, or that full intent of the invitation for bids is not clear, then the prospective bidder shall submit a written request for clarification no later than ten (10) working days before the scheduled bid opening at 4:30 pm to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547.

The prospective bidder shall examine carefully the site of the proposed work and the invitation for bids before submitting a bid.

The Contracting Officer (CO) may, upon recommendation of the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR), issue an addendum notifying all prospective bidders known to have received an invitation for bids, or if issued after the deadline for submission of the notice of intention to bid, to those persons who submitted such notice, of any changes to the invitation for bids. The Department of Public Works will make every reasonable attempt to notify all persons who obtained the invitation for bids from the Technical Services Division by telephone to pick up the addendum or if the CO chooses, the addendum may be mailed or delivered personally or by facsimile machine. If the bid proposal requires the acknowledgment of addenda, the prospective bidder shall indicate the date of each addendum in the space provided. **It shall be the prospective bidder's responsibility to confirm the existence of any addendum by telephoning the COTR at (670) 234-9828/9838 no later than ten (10) Calendar days before the scheduled bid opening.**

Sealed bids must be marked "DPW19-IFB-008". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascension Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m. local time April 5, 2019**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional Seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **10:00 a.m. local time, April 5, 2019**, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@cnmidof.net. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **April 5, 2019** and the BID documents must be received at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than **April 16, 2019**. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Office of the Director of Procurement and Supply, located at the former Emergency Management Office, Ascension Drive, Building No. 1301, Capitol Hill, Saipan, at **10:00 a.m. local time, April 20, 2019**. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at **10:00 a.m. local time, on April 5, 2019**.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. **Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashier's check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Surety requiring approval of the Attorney General must be pre-approved prior to bid submission.** Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations **\$70-30.3-245**. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than \$25,000.00. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- a) A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- b) A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceed the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

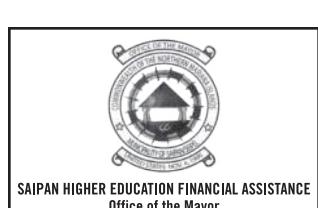
- 1) Cash
- 2) US Gov't Securities
- 3) Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- 4) Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- 5) Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is **Two Hundred Forty (240) calendar days** upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. Liquidated damages for delays beyond the established completion date will be assessed at the rate of **Five Hundred (US\$500.00)** for each and every day the work is delayed beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

JAMES A. ADA
Secretary of Public Works

JOE A. TUDELA
Acting Director of Procurement & Supply



SAIPAN HIGHER EDUCATION FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Saipan

NOTICE OF REGULAR SHEFA BOARD MEETING

In accordance with 1 CMC § 9901 et seq., as amended, the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance February 28th, 2019 at 9:00 am at the SHEFA Office Conference Room, 2nd Floor, CTC Building, Oleai Beach Road, Saipan.

AGENDA

- I. Preliminary Matters
 - 1. Roll Call
 - 2. Adoption of Agenda
 - 3. Adoption of Minutes from January 24th, 2018
- II. Public Comments
- III. Reports
 - 1. Administrator
 - 2. Chair
- IV. Committee
 - a. Committee on Awards
 - b. Committee on Appeal/Deferments/Forbearance
 - c. Committee on Policy and Procedures
 - d. Committee on Program and Development
 - e. Committee of Fiscal, Legislative and Community Affairs
- V. Old Business
 - 1. Re-examination of SHEFA application deadline for NMTI
 - 2. Increase grant-in-aid amount for both off-island and on-island recipients
 - 3. Marianas Public Land Trust financial assistance for eligible applicants
 - 4. Amendment to SHEFA Bylaws
- VI. New Business
 - 1. Spring 2019 application status
 - 2. 2019 Budget Proposal
- VII. Executive Session
- VIII. Misc.
- VIII. Next Meeting
- X. Adjournment

Note: Meeting may continue the following day should the need arise.



Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

Full disclosure of Mueller report is a must

Congress and the people of America must press for maximum disclosure of Special Counsel Robert Mueller's findings.

Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election is critical to establish whether the election was compromised and to address vulnerabilities. The report is the CT scan the nation is eagerly awaiting to learn whether there's a cancer attacking the heart of its democracy. Voters – and history – will look darkly on any who try to withhold or limit disclosure.

Findings, evidence and explanations must be fully disclosed, without creating doubt about whether the administration of President Donald Trump is manipulating or withholding information. This was always the case, but concerns about interference are amplified by Trump's extraordinary efforts to discredit and undermine the investigation. Mueller's work has already led to dozens of indictments and guilty pleas by Trump's former campaign chairman and other advisers.

Even if Mueller's report says he's found nothing further, "we need to know what he knows and how he came to that conclusion, if it's to be believed," U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Washington, told this editorial board on Wednesday.

If Mueller finds "wrongdoing or Russian collusion or however you want to call it, we need to know how he drew those conclusions and why so that we can remedy that as a country" she said. "I adamantly believe public knowledge and transparency is how we're going to be able to move forward, no matter what's in that report."

New Attorney General William Barr acknowledges the gravity of the Mueller investigation and pledged "as much transparency as I can consistent with the law." But Barr's word may not be enough to overcome skepticism of this Trump appointee chosen during the Mueller probe, especially one who favors strong executive privilege.

There may be material involved that can't be disclosed without jeopardizing national security.

U.S. Sens. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and Richard Blumenthal, D-Connecticut, introduced a bill last month that would provide transparency by requiring that the attorney general provide a written statement explaining whether any information was classified "or is otherwise not made available to the public" and explain the reasons.

Their Special Counsel Transparency Act also includes protections against White House interference as sought by House bills that didn't advance last year. It would require disclosure of such reports, even if the special counsel is removed from office or resigns before the investigation is complete.

Mueller's report should start an extraordinary and public examination of how vulnerable the world's leading democracy is to foreign interference. Attempts to hide its findings from the American people, preventing them from learning the full truth and creating more uncertainty, would be tantamount to collusion.

(c)2019 The Seattle Times



Cheaper college makes more sense than free college

One of Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders' tentpole ideas is the promise of a free college education for all Americans. Senator Elizabeth Warren, who is also running in 2020, also supports the idea. To a millennial generation drowning in student debt, whose job prospects were severely curtailed by the Great Recession, free college is a tempting prospect. Supporters believe it could also help rectify the immense opportunity gap between the children of the rich and the children of the poor:

But "free college" could mean any number of things, not all of them beneficial.

If you want to make something cheaper, there are two ways to do it—you either help pay for it, or you limit the price that sellers can charge. If "free college" were simply a bunch of government subsidies for tuition, however, colleges would simply raise prices. We know this is true because something similar has happened before; widely available subsidized student loans helped push up tuition much more than the cost of other goods. So in practice, "free college" is going to mean price controls.

The typical danger of price controls—that they create shortages—isn't a problem here, since college spots are already rationed by the application process. But price controls might reduce quality. The U.S. has the most expensive tuition in the world, but it also has most of the best universities in the world. Forcing top public schools like the University of Texas or the University of Michigan to cut their budgets might weaken their ability to hire top professors and provide supportive living environments for students, thus reducing education quality.

It also might weaken U.S. technological dominance and the health of local economies. Many people think of colleges purely in terms of education, but this ignores their function as engines of research. Universities have produced, and continue to produce, many of the breakthroughs that make the U.S. a technological leader. Research, not education, is also the main way that universities benefit the economies of surrounding regions and towns; students tend to leave campus after they graduate, but research stays local, and helps to draw in private investment. Government provides some of the money for university research, but undergraduate tuition also helps fund it.

A final danger of tuition caps is that they could end up benefiting the rich a lot more than the poor and middle class. Currently, many colleges offer need-based financial aid, and the government offers additional assistance such as Pell Grants, while the rich and the upper-middle class are generally forced to pay the full sticker price. Tuition caps would therefore lower prices for the rich while doing little for the poor. But that doesn't mean tuition caps would make colleges more interested in admitting poor kids; because tuition caps would force colleges to rely more on alumni donations for funding, they might feel pressure to seek out rich kids who would be more likely to contribute money after graduation.

By NOAH SMITH

Bloomberg News

Noah Smith is a Bloomberg Opinion columnist. He was an assistant professor of finance at Stony Brook University, and he blogs at *Noahpinion*.



So simply capping tuition is a bad idea, as is simply subsidizing tuition. But what about a combination of both? Sanders' bill would provide federal funding to states in exchange for them eliminating tuition. This mixed approach is better, but it still runs into some of the same problems. Since the federal government would decide how much funding a university should have, it would stop any individual university from being able to increase its spending on upgrading its educational experience or their research activities (unless it could solicit more private donations). That would make it harder for universities to improve. Additionally, if federal funding wasn't regularly increased to keep up with inflation, rising research costs, or higher professor salaries, the quality of U.S. institutions could steadily degrade. And the problem of helping the rich rather than the poor would remain.

But this doesn't mean that all plans to make college cheaper are hopelessly flawed; it simply means they need to be better targeted.

Grants and other non-loan aid for low-income students should be increased. These may push up tuition a bit, but they'll also shift the cost of college onto wealthier families. Many states are already doing this, and some Democrats in Congress have introduced a bill to do it at the federal level as well.

Second, community college can be made free, by replacing tuition with government funding in a Sanders-esque manner. Since community colleges don't do research, and since they tend to serve lower-income students, there is little downside to making these free. California Governor Gavin Newsom is already trying to do this.

Third, states and the federal government can increase funding for public universities on the condition that they limit rising administrative costs, which are a substantial source of rising tuition. And finally, federal funding for research can and should increase significantly, allowing colleges to rely less on tuition to pay for labs and researcher salaries. Recently, research funding has been heading in the wrong direction:

So although centrist Democrats like Senator Amy Klobuchar are right to say that free college is probably a bridge too far, cheaper college and free college for low-income kids, is an achievable and desirable goal. This is a case when big promises should give way to smart policy.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

After his first overdose, my husband promised it wouldn't happen again. I believed him

The first time I saved my husband's life, his face was the color of saturated denim. I found him curled on the floor, body fighting itself. Limbs constricted, shoulders twitching, he snorted desperately as his lungs gasped for oxygen.

I yelled his name, shook his arm, slapped his face. The sputtering sound came less often, and he was so, so blue.

"Has your husband ingested or administered any opioids?" the paramedic asked after they pushed me aside.

I shook my head no, feeling my teeth chatter. It felt like a random question. I knew what drug users looked like—disheveled on street corners, rummaging through cabinets for pills. My husband was vice president of a tech company. Earlier that night, we had been planning our upcoming Finland vacation. He was no addict. I told them he was on Klonopin for anxiety and Adderall for ADD, but other than that we were an ibuprofen family. I barely knew what an opioid was, and my husband wouldn't even take Sudafed for a cold.

Despite my answer, the paramedics gave him naloxone, which counteracts opioid overdose. It revived him in a way

that seemed impossible. Propped up in the stretcher wearing his usual T-shirt and gym shorts, he looked like he was ready to binge watch "Battlestar Galactica," not like someone headed to the hospital for an overdose. Driving as close behind the ambulance as I dared, I couldn't stop looking at his pink cheeks through the back windows. An instant fix. As if the blue had never happened.

Opioids, I later learned, cause blood to rush to the skin where the body's temperature receptors lie. They feed the brain an overwhelming dose of information, so the user feels nothing. Too high a dose drops blood pressure, and decreases respiration to fatal levels. That's why my husband was blue—the drug had told his lungs to stop working. Naloxone binds to opioid receptors in the brain, blocking them and stopping the flood of dopamine. Medically speaking, the drug is simple, and emergency responders have employed it with increasing frequency. The Nashville Fire Department recently reported a 93 percent increase, to 1,777 doses, last year.

My husband later explained that he bought the drug he had taken online from a laboratory in China that sells synthetics.

By LAUREN MAULDIN

Los Angeles Times



Lauren Mauldin is a creative nonfiction MFA candidate at UC Riverside and an editor for The Plaid Horse magazine.

Since 2013, these "designer" synthetic opioids have caused more overdoses than heroin, oxycodone or hydrocodone. In a recent study, the CDC reported synthetic opioid deaths increased almost 47 percent, to 28,400 deaths, in 2017, and increased border control or drug raids aren't the solution. The drugs come through the mail to anyone who can do a Google search.

I didn't know any of this the night I watched him in the back of the ambulance. I didn't know that opioid users are the most likely drug abusers to relapse. All I knew that night was how relieved I was when the color returned to his skin and that I would do anything to help him, because I couldn't stop picturing the blue. It had felt like he was underwater, waiting for me to pull him back up to the surface.

Later that night, he tried to explain. "You know when someone has chronic back pain? A massage isn't going to fix the problem, but it makes it feel so much better for a short time. You know it's going to hurt again, but relief feels so good. That's what using is when I'm depressed. For a few minutes, everything is OK."

He told me how he had found entire message boards devoted to sharing tips for the perfect high. He found online labs selling synthetic versions of everything—ecstasy, amphetamines, a buffet of opioids. The drug that had nearly killed him was butyrfentanyl, which he boiled with a spoon and poured into a syringe before injecting. It is an analog of fentanyl, the drug that killed Prince and Tom Petty. Fentanyl is 80 to 100 times more potent than heroin. In late 2018, the CDC named it the deadliest drug in America.

In the days following his overdose, I started unpacking the odd behaviors that hadn't made sense in recent months. His falling asleep mid-dinner, spoon in hand; the two car accidents in a month; his sudden disdain for our dogs that he normally doted on. How, living alongside this man who was my best friend and favorite person, had I missed his addiction?

My husband was never disheveled on a street corner. He had enough musical instruments for a one-man-band, ran 5Ks, made this amazing pie-stuffed cake every year for my birthday. He had a master's in engineering from the University of Texas and wanted to start a nonprofit to help ex-cons integrate into the corporate workplace. He invented a device that alerted his blind Boston terrier when she was about to walk into objects. He was the smartest person I've ever known, and an addict.

He promised me he would never relapse, but refused to go to inpatient rehab for fear his co-workers would learn his secret. The near-death experience had scared him too, he said, and he'd get it under control. He started therapy and antidepressants. I started monitoring him constantly, and assumed that would be enough. I didn't understand then how his brain constantly begged for the drug. I didn't know how much help we needed. When my husband told me I would never find him sputtering and unconscious again, he meant it, and I believed him.

Two weeks later, he picked up a small package from China at the post office. A few hours after his appointment with an addiction specialist, he injected the butyrfentanyl. He wasn't blue when I found him. His skin had a tinge of yellow, except for the patch of burgundy on his forearm where he had pushed the needle.

He was cold, and he was 36 years old.

Epitaph Laughs, A Saved Face Falls in Half

J'ai vecu dans ces temps et pourtant j'étais libre (I lived in those times, yet I was free.)

—Robert Desnos, French Surrealist poet (1900 - 1945)

I tweeted in those times, my first two years I was almost alone, by myself, not fallen yet oblivious, arrogant I ignored human decency and sent my daily drivel out on the internet. I ruled in those days, in the land of the free I watched the stock market and all the polls revolving around me, always watching TV my government shutdown ignored innocent souls. You who read this what do you 'really' think? embarrassed by the way I made America 'great'? are you still involved in the democratic process? rent paid? mortgage? do you think politics stinks? You still living, think nothing of me, I'm long gone America continues to grow in a progressive dawn.

Kingfish 45 Sought Caught Bought – Alive

"Yes, idiots, paralytics, parasites go bobbing in the ebbing sewage, nights out in the suburbs, where there are no lights."

—Elizabeth Bishop, (1911 - 1979)

Caught in the glare of US national cable TV focus campaign targeted from Russia on multiple fronts Congress investigation results surprise and stroke us Trump may have been a paid and willing Russian dupe "This Russia 'er' thing" seems to keep focusing on thieves, thugs and mugs from both sides indicted international banking connections are being sought who sold out to whom and who is gonna get caught? A net thrown in troubled waters with rubles for bait then double Russian eagles and an American bald dove on a hapless hyperbolic thoughtless kingfish a prime time presidential entree on the dinner plate a fried fish on the surface rotting from the head to the country's shame he plays the conspiracy game.

Where in Cyberspace Lies 8,000-Plus Lies

"...haunt me with hope and tempt me to pursue; the gods, methinks, dwell just beyond the blue"

—from Sonnet XVI by George Santayana (1863-1952)

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY 'PEPE BATBON' CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune



Joey "Pepe Batbon" Connolly is a retired teacher and has been named a poet laureate of Tinian. He has taught English in CNMI public schools for the past 30 years. He has also taught in Alaska, New Orleans, and Las Vegas.

Eight thousand fact checked lies now forever reside and haunt US citizens from east coast to west coast tweets in cyber cloudy cyberspace they can not hide expose off the cuff hyperbole, brag, bluff, and boast. With national exposure his bluster on the TV screen his big and small lies are very easily seen through like Pinocchio whose nose grew and grew and grew his ignorant and irrational logic is rude and mean. It's a 'sad' state as he denigrates the FBI and DOJ fires one cabinet member after another, no peace no one wants open positions, he plays musical chairs staffers fear speaking, dissent must desist and cease Indeed a tragic state for America and foreign affairs as 45 shut down the country and tensions increased.

Did America Choose the Lesser Evil

"O world, thou choosest not the better part!"

—George Santayana, 1863 - 1952

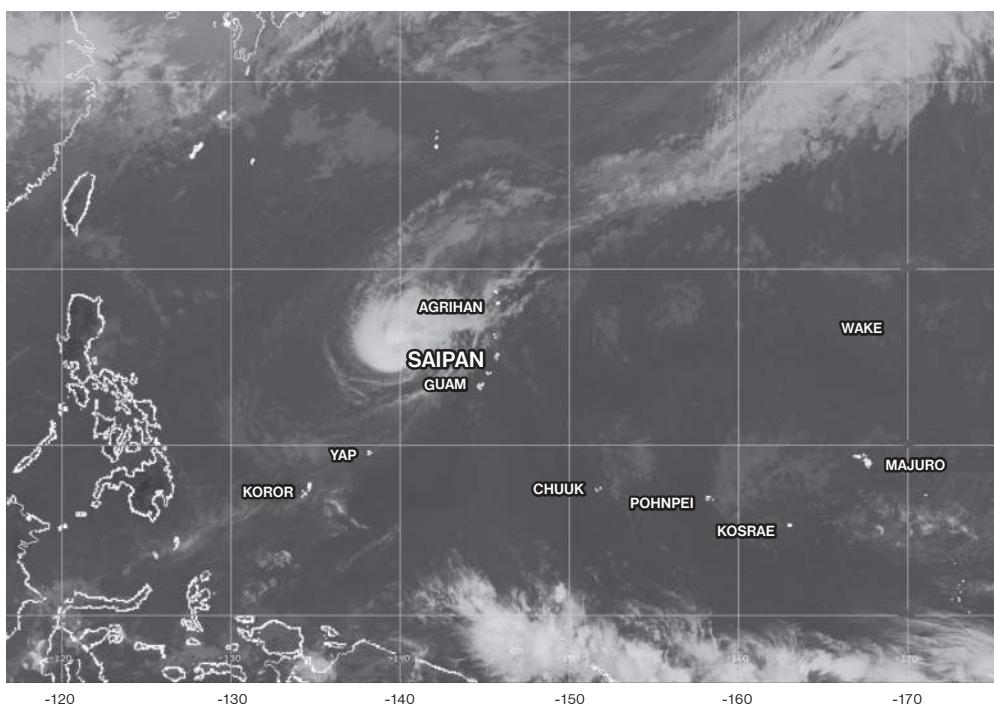
My country you thought you chose the lesser evil but through the Electoral College you got the worse the real true 'lesser evil' won by three million people you got the guy with a ruble filled Russian purse Now America stumbles in the eyes of the world 14,600 Hispanic children in custody on the border 45's cabinet breaks up the WH in chaos and disorder Congress must lead us out of Trumpty Dumpty's mess Bipartisanship in legislation must exist in their sessions common sense and compromise on both sides of the aisle as they legislate one bill at a time at a snail's pace past, over and around 45's tantrums, fear, and dread Help our Trump bruised democracy heal and save face the rich privileged spoiled 45th POTUS we must replace.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

| TODAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | SUNDAY | MONDAY |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| | | | | |
| Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph. | Partly cloudy with isolated light showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. | Partly cloudy with isolated showers. |
| 86° | 76° | 87° | 76° | 88° |
| 77° | 87° | 77° | 87° | 77° |

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:55 AM, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2019

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Skies are partly cloudy with moderate southeast winds across the Marianas, but radar shows only a few sprinkles. Seas are indicated between 6 and 8 feet at the Guam buoys. Meanwhile, weakening Typhoon Wutip is still lurking west-northwest of the islands near 16N 140E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

| MICRONESIA | | ▲ | ▼ | °F |
|---------------|---------------|-----|---|-----|
| Guam and Rota | Partly Cloudy | 84° | / | 76° |
| Palau | Partly Cloudy | 83° | / | 75° |
| Yap | Partly Cloudy | 85° | / | 78° |
| Chuuk | Thunderstorm | 85° | / | 80° |
| Pohnpei | Thunderstorm | 85° | / | 79° |
| Kosrae | Thunderstorm | 85° | / | 79° |
| Majuro | Partly Cloudy | 84° | / | 79° |

| AROUND THE GLOBE | | ▲ | ▼ | °F |
|------------------|---------------|-----|---|-----|
| Auckland | Partly Cloudy | 72° | / | 61° |
| Beijing | Sunny | 61° | / | 34° |
| Hong Kong | Partly Cloudy | 75° | / | 68° |
| Honolulu | Partly Cloudy | 74° | / | 63° |
| London | Showers | 55° | / | 45° |
| Los Angeles | Cloudy | 65° | / | 55° |
| Manila | Partly Cloudy | 90° | / | 72° |
| Melbourne | Sunny | 97° | / | 73° |
| Miami | Partly Cloudy | 80° | / | 68° |
| New York | Cloudy | 40° | / | 32° |
| Osaka | Mostly Sunny | 54° | / | 39° |
| Paris | Rain | 61° | / | 46° |
| Busan | Partly Cloudy | 57° | / | 43° |
| Rome | Sunny | 64° | / | 46° |
| Salem | Thunderstorm | 71° | / | 56° |
| San Francisco | Partly Cloudy | 54° | / | 44° |
| Seoul | Sunny | 54° | / | 28° |
| Tokyo | Showers | 55° | / | 43° |
| Washington, DC | Mostly Cloudy | 53° | / | 38° |



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 21, 2019

| DEPARTURES | | | | ARRIVALS | | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|--------------------------|------------------------|---------|-----------|--------------------------|
| SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) | | | | GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117 | 9:15am | 9:55am | Daily | UA174 | 7:30am | 8:11am | Daily |
| UA105 | 6:25pm | 7:05pm | 2, 4 | UA104 | 4:50pm | 5:31pm | 2, 4 |
| SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) | | | | BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 7C3451 | 3:15am | 6:30am | Daily | 7C3452 | 9:35pm | 2:00am+1 | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 |
| | | | | 7C3452 | 10:05pm | 2:00am+1 | 1 |
| SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) | | | | SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 0Z626 | 2:10am | 6:00am | 1 | 7C3402 | 10:10am | 3:30pm | Daily |
| 0Z626 | 2:50am | 6:40am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 | 0Z625 | 7:40pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 |
| | | | | 0Z625 | 8:20pm | 1:40am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| 7C3403 | 4:35am | 8:25am | Daily | 7C3404 | 10:10pm | 3:40am+1 | Daily |
| 7C3401 | 4:30pm | 8:25pm | Daily | | | | |
| SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) | | | | SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 3U8648 | 6:10am | 8:50am | 1, 4, 5, 7 | 3U8647 | 10:20pm | 4:50am+1 | 3, 4, 6, 7 |
| SAIPAN-HANGZHOU (GHG) | | | | HANGZHOU (GHG)-SAIPAN | | | |
| JD396 | 7:30am | 11:00am | 1 | JD395 | 8:05am | 3:30pm | 4 |
| JD396 | 4:50pm | 7:55pm | 4 | JD395 | 9:35pm | 5:00am+1 | 7 |
| SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) | | | | GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN | | | |
| 3U8646 | 4:30am | 7:55am | 2, 6 | 3U8645 | 7:55pm | 2:40am+1 | 1, 5 |
| SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) | | | | BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN | | | |
| MU764 | 1:30am | 6:35am | 3, 5, 7 | MU763 | 4:40pm | 12:30am+1 | 2, 4, 6 |
| SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) | | | | MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN | | | |
| UA117/183 | 9:15am | 9:40pm | 2, 5 via GUM | UA182/174 | 12:40am | 8:11am+1 | 3, 6 via GUM |
| UA117/183 | 9:15am | 9:50pm | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM | PR110/UA174 | 10:05pm | 8:11am+1 | Daily via GUM |
| UA117/193 | 9:15am | 11:50pm | 2, 5 via GUM-ROR | UA192/174 | 10:30pm | 8:11am+1 | 2, 5 via GUM-ROR |
| UA105/183 | 4:45pm | 9:40pm | 2 via GUM | UA184/174 | 10:55pm | 8:11am+1 | 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM |
| UA105/183 | 4:45pm | 9:50pm | 4 via GUM | UA116/174 | 11:45pm | 8:11am+1 | 2, 4 via GUM |
| SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) | | | | HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN | | | |
| HX077 | 1:50am | 5:15am | 1, 4 | 0Z722/625 | 1:15pm | 1:00am+1 | 7 via ICN |
| 0Z626/721 | 2:10am | 11:50am | 1 via ICN | 0Z722/625 | 1:15pm | 1:40am+1 | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN |
| 0Z626/721 | 2:50am | 11:50am | 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN | HX076 | 5:15pm | 12:15am+1 | 3, 7 |
| | | | | U043 | 5:45am | 8:40am | 1, 3, 5, 7 |
| | | | | UA117/159 | 9:15am | 11:00pm | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via GUM |
| | | | | UA105/159 | 4:45pm | 11:00pm | 2, 4 via GUM |
| STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC. | | | | | | | |
| SAIPAN TO ROTA | | | | | | | |
| FLIGHT # | DEPARTURE | ARRIVAL | FREQUENCY | 1203 | 9:00AM | 9:15AM | Daily |
| 1301 | 7:30AM | 8:00AM | Daily | 1204 | 10:00AM | 10:15AM | Daily |
| 1302 | 11:30AM | 12:00PM | Daily | 1205 | 11:00AM | 11:15AM | Daily |
| 1303 | 4:00PM | 4:30PM | Daily | 1206 | 12:00PM | 12:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1207 | 1:00PM | 1:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1208 | 2:00PM | 2:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1209 | 3:00PM | 3:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1210 | 4:00PM | 4:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1211 | 5:00PM | 5:15PM | Daily |
| | | | | 1212 | 6:0 | | |



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Business

Wynn Resorts penalized \$20M over sex allegations

LAS VEGAS (AP)—Casino mogul Steve Wynn's former company was fined a record \$20 million by Nevada gambling regulators on Tuesday for failing to investigate claims of sexual misconduct made against him before he resigned a year ago.

The penalty against Wynn Resorts Ltd. ends an investigation that began after The Wall Street Journal reported that several women said the company founder harassed or assaulted them.

Wynn Resorts will keep its gambling license under the Nevada Gaming Commission settlement approved by four commissioners who set the fine.

"It's not about one man," said Commissioner Philip Pro, a former federal court judge. "It's about a failure of a corporate culture to effectively govern itself as it should."

Pro called the commission "guardians of the integrity of gambling," with a responsibility to make sure license holders "don't do things that bring disrepute on the industry" in Nevada.

The previous highest fine in state history was \$5.5 million in 2014 against the sports betting and mobile gambling system company now known as CG Technology.

Fiat Chrysler: \$4.5B plan would add 6,500 Detroit-area jobs

DETROIT (AP)—Fiat Chrysler on Tuesday announced a \$4.5 billion plan that includes building the first new auto assembly plant in Detroit in almost three decades and increasing its workforce in the area by about 6,500 jobs, an investment officials touted as an uncommon opportunity to revive the region's economy.

Under the plan, the company said it would reopen a shuttered engine plant in the city and convert another in the same complex into a future assembly plant for the Jeep Grand Cherokee and a new, three-row, full-size Jeep SUV and plug-in hybrid models for all.

The Motor City was once home to about a dozen massive auto production plants, but a rash of closures helped to push Detroit's unemployment rate to a peak of almost 29 percent a decade ago. The new Chrysler plant would be the first since 1991 and is expected to add 3,850 jobs. The company said in a news release that it would add another 1,100 new jobs at its Jefferson North Assembly plant in De-

Commissioners John Moran Jr. and Deborah Fuetsch said they considered a higher fine, but did not specify an amount.

Chairman Tony Alamo said \$20 million "makes it clear to all licensees that this culture cannot be tolerated," while also letting the publicly traded company "heal."

"It needs to move needles here," he said. "It needs to ring across the entire country."

Steve Wynn himself was not part of the settlement, and neither Wynn nor any personal representatives attended the commission hearing. Wynn has denied all allegations against him. One of his attorneys, Colby Williams, said by telephone that he was aware of the fine but declined to comment.

The commission has frozen Wynn's Nevada casino license. It has not taken other disciplinary action against him or the other board members and executives named in the settlement. None are still with the company.

"Isn't it strange that the people ... that are the subject of this aren't even in the room today?" Moran observed of the new slate of company executives and board members sitting before him. "The people that are in this room now ... they're left with the

train wreck to try to fix it."

Wynn resigned as board chairman and company CEO in February 2018 following reports that he harassed or assaulted several women. He also sold his company shares.

Details about the investigation and its findings were not made public.

But Wynn Resorts acknowledged in settlement documents that several former board members and executives knew about but failed to investigate after Wynn paid \$7.5 million in 2005 to a former salon employee who alleged he raped her and that she became pregnant as a result.

"Mr. Wynn ... engaged in intimate and sexual conduct with (company) employees," the settlement documents said.

The company also failed to investigate a cocktail server's allegation that from 2005 to 2006 Wynn pressured her into a nonconsensual sexual relationship, the documents said. Wynn paid a \$975,000 private settlement to that woman and her parents, the settlement said.

Wynn Resorts neither admitted nor denied that company executives were made aware of allegations that Wynn sexually harassed multiple flight attendants on company aircraft.

troit, and roughly 1,500 new jobs at facilities in the neighboring suburb of Warren.

The investment would roughly double FCA's hourly workforce in the city and the expected average wage for the new jobs is about \$58,000 a year.

Speaking at a news conference after the announcement, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan called the deal a "once in a generational chance to change the economic" fortunes of Detroit. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said it has been a long time since Michigan has seen an automotive investment as "big and transformative" as Fiat Chrysler's plan.

The investment will also have a ripple effect, boosting the automotive industry and helping other non-auto businesses elsewhere in Michigan and other Midwest states, Whitmer said.

Fiat Chrysler said the additional investments are subject to tax incentive packages it was working out with the city and state of Michigan. The automaker would need about

200 acres (80 hectares) of land for the project, most owned by the city, Great Lakes Water Authority, DTE Energy and the Moroun family, which owns significant amounts of city real estate and the Ambassador Bridge that connects Michigan to Ontario, Canada.

Most of the needed land would be for expanding the footprint of the existing facility, parking and other uses.

City officials signed a memorandum of understanding with the automaker, and they were ironing out a deal to assemble land for the project over the next 60 days.

If enough land is acquired and the tax incentives approved, construction is expected to start later this year and the first new vehicles could be in production by the end of 2020.

The automaker's injection of money and jobs into the Motor City contrasts sharply with news from rival General Motors Co., which announced plans to shutter its Detroit-Hamtramck plant next year and plans to close four others in the U.S. and Canada.

Nation

United Methodist delegates reject recognizing gay marriage

ST. LOUIS (AP)—The United Methodist Church, America's second-largest Protestant denomination, faces a likely surge in defections and acts of defiance after delegates at a crucial conference voted Tuesday to strengthen the faith's divisive bans on same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBT clergy.

Emotions were high throughout the third and final day of the UMC's meeting. Some supporters of greater LGBT inclusion were in tears, while others vented their anger when, midway through the session, delegates defeated a proposal that would have let regional and local church bodies decide for themselves on gay-friendly policies.

"Devastation," was how former Methodist pastor Rebecca Wilson of Detroit described her feelings. "As someone who left because I'm gay, I'm waiting for the church I love to stop bringing more hate."

After several more hours of debate, the conservatives' proposal, called the Traditional Plan, was approved by a vote of 438-384. Opponents unsuccessfully sought to weaken the plan with hostile amendments or to prolong the debate past



AP
Ed Rowe, left, Rebecca Wilson, Robin Hager and Jill Zundel, react to the defeat of a proposal that would allow LGBT clergy and same-sex marriage within the United Methodist Church at the denomination's 2019 Special Session of the General Conference in St. Louis, Mo., Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019.

is the biblical plan."

Council of Bishops President Kenneth H. Carter, speaking at a news conference after the session, said the meeting was necessary "because if the impasse we found ourselves in" over questions of human sexuality.

"I would just simply say that we have work to do. We did not accomplish that in these three days," Carter said.

Carter said he is concerned the plan will cause progressive churches to leave the denomination. He said church leaders "will be doing a lot of outreach" to those churches.

"Persons will feel harmed," Carter said.

Flood threat prompts Northern California evacuations

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Thousands of people in Northern California's wine country were ordered to evacuate Tuesday evening shortly before a river reached flood stage as a winter storm dumped torrential rain and heavy snow that shut down major mountain highways.

Authorities said evacuations were ordered for about 4,000 people in and around Guerneville, which is about 60 miles (97 kilometers) north of San Francisco.

By 6 p.m., the river north of San Francisco — which is prone to flooding in heavy rain — had topped 32 feet (10 meters) and forecasters predicted it would peak at about 46 feet (14 meters) by Wednesday evening, which would be the highest level since 1995.

Earlier Tuesday at the River Inn Grill in Guerneville, workers were preparing by putting perishables on high shelves in storage rooms.

But manager Andre Vazquez said the one-story building could be largely submerged if the river reaches 46 feet.

"If it gets to 46 feet, it's done. There is no way to prepare for that," Vazquez said.

Guerneville often floods during heavy rain and people seemed nonchalant Tuesday about the threat, said Joseph Chung, whose parents own the Koala's Fine Food restaurant.

"A couple of weeks ago people were using kayaks to get to their mailbox," Chung said. "If it gets really bad, we'll get out."

Earlier in the day, a mudslide near Monte Rio near Guerneville trapped a man and a woman before they were rescued, messy but unharmed.

"Well I fell into the mud when the tree fell over the top of me. It happened so fast you don't even know, you know?" Kear Koch told KGO-TV.

The Napa River and some waterways in Mendocino County also were expected to top flood stages.

The National Weather Service also issued flood warnings and flash flood watches for the San Francisco Bay Area and many parts of the Sacramento area, lasting into Thursday morning.

Relentless rain forced the cancellation or delay of hundreds of flights in San Francisco and the city of Santa Rosa received a record 5.66 inches of rain, making it the wettest day for the date since at least 1902.

In the Sierra Nevada, the California Department of Transportation reported that a maintenance yard above 6,000 feet had received 30 inches of snow along on Tuesday.

Several mountain and foothill roads were repeatedly closed because of white-out conditions or to clear trucks and cars that spun out on the slippery pavement.

Asia

Trump, Kim near opening of second nuclear summit

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — President Donald Trump hoped for “great things” from his second meeting with North Korea’s Kim Jong Un as he paid a courtesy call Wednesday on his Vietnamese hosts. Kim was expected to take in some sights before the leaders open their second nuclear summit with private talks and a social dinner.

Anticipation for what will come out of the summit is running high in Hanoi. But the carnival-like atmosphere in the Vietnamese capital, with street artists painting likenesses of the leaders and vendors hawking T-shirts emblazoned with their faces, stands in contrast to the serious items on the agenda: North Korea’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

“We have a very big meeting planned tonight as you know, with North Korea, Chairman Kim, and I think it may very well turn out to be very successful,” Trump told the top leaders of Vietnam.

“I look forward to the meeting tonight with Chairman Kim and hopefully it’s going to be successful. We’ll see what happens, but he wants to do something great,” Trump said, adding that Kim could use Vietnam as a model for economic revitalization. “If you look at what you’ve done in a short time, he can do it in a very, very rapid time — make North Korea into a great economic power.”

The president sounded a similar message about Vietnamese prosperity in a tweet



President Donald Trump waves a Vietnam flag as he meets with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, waving an American flag, at the Office of Government Hall, Wednesday, Feb. 27, 2019, in Hanoi.

before he left his heavily guarded hotel.

“Vietnam is thriving like few places on earth. North Korea would be the same, and very quickly, if it would denuclearize,” Trump tweeted Wednesday, hours before he and Kim were to meet again. “The potential is AWESOME, a great opportunity, like almost none other in history, for my friend Kim Jong Un. We will know fairly soon - Very Interesting!”

Trump said at a separate meeting with Vietnamese officials that “hopefully great things will happen later on with our meeting” with Kim.

Trump and Kim first met last June in Singapore, a summit that was long on historic pageantry but short on any enforceable agreements for North Korea to give up its nuclear arsenal. North Korea has spent decades, at great economic sacrifice, building its nuclear program, and there is widespread skepti-

cism that it will give away that program without getting something substantial from the U.S.

That could be a declaration to end the Korean War. Such an announcement would allow Trump to make history and would dovetail with his opposition to “forever wars.” But it wouldn’t amount to concrete steps toward denuclearization and could even turn the focus of discussions to removing or reducing the 28,500 U.S. troops stationed in South Korea. If there is no war, North Korea could ask why the U.S. needs to have troops in South Korea at all.

The conflict ended in 1953 with an armistice, essentially a cease-fire signed by North Korea, China and the 17-nation, U.S.-led United Nations Command. If made, the declaration would amount to a political statement, ostensibly teeing up talks for a formal peace treaty that would involve other nations.

people in the mine pit.

Police say Indian mortar shells kill 6 civilians in Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Pakistani police say mortar shells fired by Indian troops from across the frontier in the Himalayan region of Kashmir have struck homes, killing six civilians and wounding several others amid increasing tensions between the two South Asian nuclear rivals. Local police official Mohammad Altaf says six people, including children, were killed Wednesday in Kotli village in Pakistan’s part of Kashmir, which is split between Pakistan and India and claimed by both in its entirety. Pakistani and Indian troops deployed in Kashmir often trade fire. The latest civilian casualties came a day after tensions escalated sharply following a pre-dawn airstrike by India that New Delhi said targeted a terrorist training camp in northwest Pakistan. Pakistan says Indian warplanes dropped bombs near the town of Balakot but there were no casualties.

Dozens buried by collapse of unlicensed Indonesia gold mine

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An unlicensed gold mine in Indonesia’s North Sulawesi province buried dozens of people, a disaster official said Wednesday, as emergency personnel dug with bare hands and farm tools as they desperately sought to unearth victims calling for help from beneath the rubble. Local disaster official Abdul Muin Paputungan said one person was confirmed dead and 14 people with injuries ranging from light to serious had been rescued. As many as 60 people were buried, he said. “Unstable soil conditions make us extra careful lifting rocks because it can lead to new landslides,” Paputungan told The Associated Press. “We still hear voices crying for help from people beneath the rubble,” he said. “Survivors estimated about 60 people are trapped in the rubble of the mining pit,” Paputungan said. Makeshift wooden structures in the mine in Bolaang Mongondow district collapsed on Tuesday evening due to unstable soil and the large number of mining holes, burying

World

AFTER BUMPY VOTE

Nigeria president set to be declared winner

KANO, Nigeria (AP) — Nigeria’s president was poised to be declared the winner of a second term in Africa’s largest democracy after urging voters to give him another chance to tackle gaping corruption, widespread insecurity and an economy limping back from recession.

While many frustrated Nigerians had said they wanted to give someone new a try, President Muhammadu Buhari, a former military dictator, had the numbers for victory, his campaign said. The official declaration, set for 3 a.m. Wednesday, follows a troubled election in the oil-rich nation weary of politicians enriching themselves instead of the people.

The campaign laid out light refreshments — “nothing heavy, finger food” — and was prepared for the president’s acceptance speech, Babatunde Fashola, its director for election monitoring, told The Associated Press as supporters danced outside party headquarters in the capital, Abuja.

In a last-ditch effort to stop the official declaration, top opposition challenger Atiku Abubakar demanded a halt to the proceedings, claiming that data from smart card

readers used in the vote had been manipulated. His party called for fresh elections in four states: Yobe, Zamfara, Nasarawa and Borno.

Buhari’s party has rejected accusations of manipulation, and Fashola called on Abubakar, a billionaire former vice president who made sweeping campaign promises to “make Nigeria work again,” to provide evidence backing his claims.

Abubakar, who hasn’t made a public appearance since Saturday’s election, should accept his loss gracefully and concede, Fashola added. “Let this nation move forward,” he said.

As the state-by-state announcements ended, Buhari led by more than 3.9 million votes in a race once described

as too close to call. To secure the presidency, a candidate must win a majority of overall votes as well as at least 25 percent of the vote in two-thirds of the states.

The election suffered from a surprise weeklong postponement and significant delays in the opening of polling stations. While election observers called the process generally peaceful, at least 53 people were killed, analysis unit SBM Intelligence said.

The death toll rose Tues-

Vatican: Cardinal Pell says he's innocent, but news hurts

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican on Tuesday insisted on Australian Cardinal George Pell’s right to further defend himself after being convicted of molesting two choirboys in his homeland, but said Pope Francis was keeping in place local church restrictions forbidding one of his most trusted advisers from having contact with children while appeals run their course.

Acting Vatican spokesman Alessandro Gisotti read a brief statement that called the news of the 77-year-old’s prelate’s conviction “painful.” He later tweeted confirmation that Pell “is no longer” the Holy See’s economy chief. Pell’s 5-year mandate was due to expire this month, and Francis had not been expected to renew it.

Gisotti took no questions from reporters about the Australian court’s verdict, which was delivered unanimously in December and appealed to Pell last week.

Due to a court order, news of the verdict couldn’t be

published until Tuesday.

Pell risks a maximum prison term of 50 years for the conviction of the charges that he sexually abused the boys in a cathedral in the 1990s when he was archbishop of Melbourne. Sentencing hearings were set to begin in Melbourne on Wednesday.

The conviction of Pell, who had been appointed by Francis to be the Vatican’s treasurer and help reform the

Holy See’s scandal-plagued financial institutions, risks further staining the pontiff’s already spotty record on cracking down on credibly accused clergy and over transparency on church handling of high-profile cases.

“In order to ensure the course of justice, the Holy Father has confirmed the precautionary measures which had been imposed by the local Ordinary on Cardinal George Pell when he returned to Australia,” Gisotti said.

The spokesman was referring to restrictions imposed by Australian church authorities after Pell went back to his

day after an attack shortly before polls opened that was claimed by the Islamic State West Africa Province extremist group in the northeast proved deadlier than first reported, with at least 17 people killed, head of research Cheta Nwanze told the AP.

It remains to be seen whether Abubakar will follow through on pledges to accept a loss, or challenge the results. A former U.S. ambassador to Nigeria, John Campbell, says the troubled election has given the candidates grounds to go to the courts. That route could take months.

In Kano, the heart of the country’s Muslim north, there was relief that the sensitive region appeared to have avoided the deadly violence that occurred in other areas.

“Well, we thank God that at least we finished this safely, without any hitches,” the state electoral commissioner, Riskuwa Shehu, told the AP minutes before carrying results to the capital.

Turnout appeared to be lower than expected, Shehu said, pointing to a number of factors, including the fear of possible violence after heated campaigning. The “disappointment” of a weeklong postponement likely also played a role, he said.

homeland in 2017 to defend himself in the criminal case.

Gisotti noted that Pell “maintains his innocence.” But, the spokesman added that while awaiting the “definitive assessment of the facts,” Pell is “prohibited from exercising public ministry and from having any voluntary contact whatsoever with minors.”

Those measures include no celebration of Mass in public.

In 2016, reports emerged that Australian police were investigating abuse allegations against Pell that involved minors. But the pope then allowed the cardinal to stay on in his Vatican roles as Francis’ leading financial adviser and as the Holy See’s economy chief, and didn’t impose any restrictive measures.

Francis had tapped Pell as his economy minister in 2014, early in his papacy, even though some allegations against the Australian were known at that time. Pell’s term in that role runs out this year.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Dozens buried by collapse of unlicensed Indonesia gold mine

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — An unlicensed gold mine in Indonesia’s North Sulawesi province buried dozens of people, a disaster official said Wednesday, as emergency personnel dug with bare hands and farm tools as they desperately sought to unearth victims calling for help from beneath the rubble. Local disaster official Abdul Muin Paputungan said one person was confirmed dead and 14 people with injuries ranging from light to serious had been rescued. As many as 60 people were buried, he said. “Unstable soil conditions make us extra careful lifting rocks because it can lead to new landslides,” Paputungan told The Associated Press. “We still hear voices crying for help from people beneath the rubble,” he said. “Survivors estimated about 60 people are trapped in the rubble of the mining pit,” Paputungan said. Makeshift wooden structures in the mine in Bolaang Mongondow district collapsed on Tuesday evening due to unstable soil and the large number of mining holes, burying

Focus

Attacked and powerless, Venezuela soldiers choose desertion

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO
ASSOCIATED PRESS

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP)—The simple house on a street ridden with potholes in this town on Colombia's restive border with Venezuela has become a refuge for the newly homeless: 40 Venezuelan soldiers who abandoned their posts and ran for their lives.

The young National Guard troops sleep on thin mats on the floor. In one room, several flak jackets rest along a wall. On a balcony, boots that got wet crossing the muddy Tachira River are set out to dry.

"I was tired of people seeing me as just one more of them," Sgt. Jorge Torres said, referring to President Nicolas Maduro's socialist government. "I'm not."

A high-stakes plan by the Venezuelan opposition to bring humanitarian aid into the country floundered Saturday when troops loyal to Maduro refused to let the trucks carrying food and medical supplies cross, but it did set off a wave of military defections unlike any seen yet amid the country's mounting crisis. Over 320 mostly low-ranking soldiers fled in a span of four days, Colombian immigration officials said Tuesday.

With no relatives in Colombia, several dozen have ended up in a shelter run by a priest. The home on a street with low-hanging electrical wires is where they are nervously keeping track of relatives left behind, figuring out how to apply for asylum and deciding what should come next.

"The only way for this government to leave, unfortunately, and all of Venezuela knows it, is for there to be a direct intervention," said Sgt. Jose Gomez, a father of two. "The only one with that power is the international community."

In interviews with The Associated Press, nine National Guard soldiers described the day that they were ordered by commanders to stop the humanitarian aid from entering Venezuela. Fearful of being jailed, many complied with orders and admitted to launching tear gas at protesters. Two said they were part of a failed plot to get the aid in. All fled after making unplanned, split-second decisions with only the uniform on their backs.

"Son, if this decision is to save your life and so that there is change, do it," Gomez said his father told him in a brief phone call before he sprinted across the border.

The defections come as the

AP



Boots belonging to defected members of Venezuela's National Guard sit out to dry where several dozen Venezuelan military defectors are sleeping at a shelter run by a priest in Cucuta, Colombia, Monday, Feb. 25, 2019. The simple house on a street ridden with potholes in this town on Colombia's restive border with Venezuela has become a refuge for the newly homeless: 40 Venezuelan soldiers who abandoned their posts and ran for their lives.

Venezuelan opposition puts pressure on the military to recognize congress leader Juan Guaido as the nation's rightful president. Venezuela's military has served as the traditional arbiter of political disputes, forcing out dictator Marcos Perez Jimenez in 1958. But the top military brass has stood fast with Maduro, who has shown no sign that he intends to relinquish power.

While Guaido has proposed amnesty to military officers who back him, the low-ranking soldiers who have defected say breaking ranks with Maduro is all but impossible. Even as the number fleeing swells, they represent a small percentage of the at least 200,000 troops in Venezuela's army.

Anyone who shows the slightest hint of disapproval risks arrest, they said, and jail has become increasingly synonymous with torture. Even those like Gomez, who wanted to see the aid brought in, followed orders to repress citizens. As Saturday grew increasingly tense, protesters threw rocks and gasoline bombs at him. He said he responded by throwing tear gas at them to protect himself.

Others at the home also had evidence of the resistance they faced that day: Torres still had blood caked beneath the skin on his nose from protesters kicking him on the ground af-

ter he surrendered to Colombian authorities. A young woman had a scratch across her cheek that she said came from a rock thrown by protesters.

During the clashes, armed pro-Maduro groups known as "colectivos" fired indiscriminately, and several of the soldiers said they feared being shot themselves. National Guard troops are equipped with crowd-control devices like rubber bullets and tear gas but do not carry any regular firearms.

Like the rest of the population struggling against hyperinflation expected to reach an eye-boggling 10 million percent this year, the soldiers also knew the indignities of life in Venezuela, where severe shortages of food and medicine have led to more than 3 million people leaving the country in recent years.

"You know that in your own home you don't even have a kilo of rice," said the female soldier, who requested anonymity, fearing for the safety of the children she left back home. "And I'm supposed to stay here fighting, why?"

Two months ago, Gomez said he watched as his newborn son died within 15 minutes because the hospital where his wife delivered did not have oxygen to pump into his failing lungs. Torres said an aunt died of cancer and an uncle succumbed to a curable

stomach infection.

"That's what pushed me to make this decision," Torres said.

When Guaido first announced the aid push, Torres said that he and three soldiers in his barracks huddled and quietly discussed their options. As National Guard drivers, they had access to armored trucks. They hatched a plan to drive the vehicles across the Simon Bolivar International Bridge, breaking down the barricades that stood in the way and allowing opposition trucks to carry the aid in.

Saturday morning, Torres climbed into one of the white-painted trucks and charged it across the bridge. Though he broke through several barricades, he also hit a woman trying to enter Colombia. She escaped serious injury, but he was forced to stop.

Getting out with his rifle in hand, Torres raised his arms in surrender and helped the woman toward an ambulance.

As one of the first deserters, he was quickly taken in and presented to Guaido, who had sneaked across the border into Colombia to oversee the aid launch.

Torres said he stood at attention and pledged his loyalty to the 35-year-old lawmaker recognized as Venezuela's interim president by over 50 nations, including the United States and many Latin Ameri-

can countries.

"We're still in time to change history," he said Guaido told him.

For Gomez, the breaking point came when he saw another National Guardsman hit in the face by a fire bomb. Even though he was badly injured, commanders wouldn't call an ambulance to take him to the hospital, Gomez said. Fearing what might happen if he himself was struck by protesters, he decided to flee.

"They wouldn't have done anything for me," Gomez said.

As he darted into one of the hundreds of illegal dirt paths snaking across Venezuela's porous border with Colombia, Gomez said "colectivo" gunmen shot in his direction. He crossed the river and ran through the brush, about a 20-minute trek. When he reached Colombian territory and spotted the military, he put his hands up in a sign of peace.

"I'm coming to surrender!" he cried out.

Many said they worry their wives and children will face repercussions and they are concerned about how they will make ends meet. Many soldiers who have fled in the last year have had difficulty getting work, winding up making a meager living selling food on the streets.

Asked about who he left behind, Torres said, "My

wife," and burst into tears. Too choked up to speak about his daughter, he could only hold up fingers to show how old she is: 6.

Nearly all the defectors would support a foreign intervention in Venezuela and join in the fight.

Guaido called on the international community Saturday evening to consider "all options" to resolve Venezuela's crisis after the clashes over the aid shipments resulted in four deaths and 300 people injured.

In a visit Monday to Colombia's capital for a meeting of regional leaders, U.S. Vice President Mike Pence echoed Donald Trump's warning that "all options are on the table," but he gingerly avoided talking about the potential for military action.

Floating ideas among each other, several of the defectors said they believe the best way forward is for more troops to desert and help form a resistance from abroad. Some envisioned an intervention led solely by Venezuelans, while others are convinced it can only be done with the help of an international coalition.

All said they don't see themselves as traitors, but rather as troops intent on restoring Venezuela's democracy.

"We're going to change history," Torres said. "We are history."

Environment

West Coast's biggest starfish vanishing amid disease, warming oceans, study finds

By LYNDA V. MAPES
THE SEATTLE TIMES

SEATTLE—Once a common delight of every beachcomber, sunflower starfish—the large, multi-armed starfish sometimes seen underwater at the near shore—are imperiled by disease and ocean warming along the West Coast.

The devastation occurred over just a few years and even affected starfish in deeper water, according to research co-led by the University of California, Davis and Cornell University published in the journal *Science Advances*.

At one time plentiful, the sea suns, or sunflower starfish, right now cannot be found off the California coast and are rare northward into Alaska, said Drew Harvell, the paper's co-author and Cornell professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. The starfish have become so rare over the past three years the scientists con-

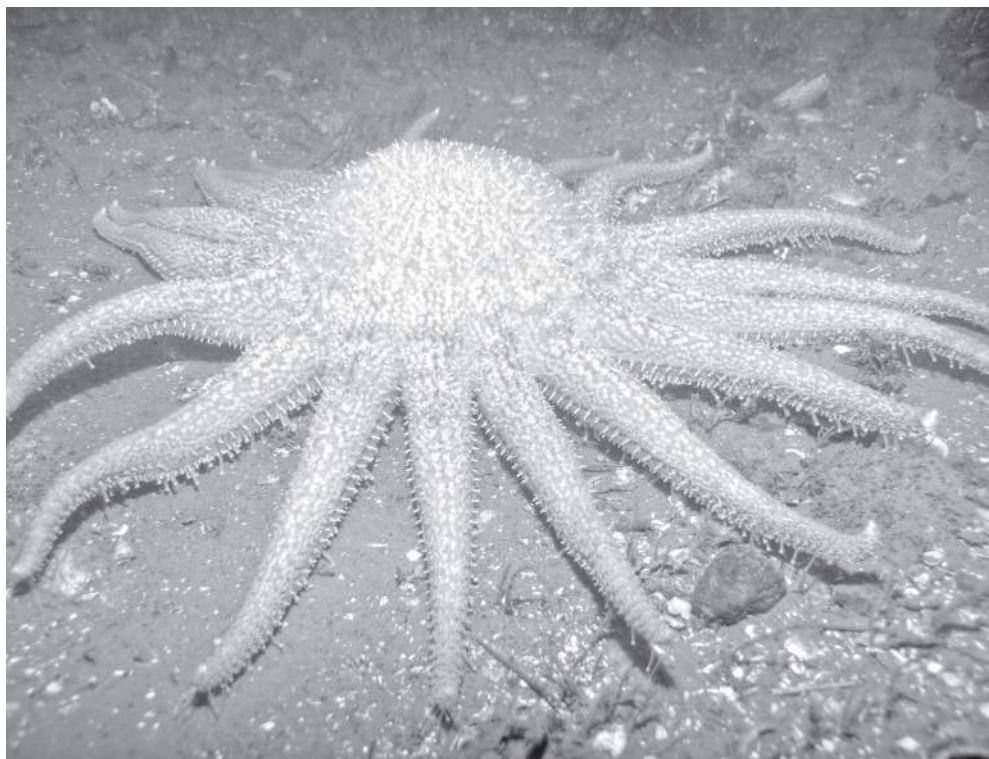
sider them endangered in the southern part of their range.

"I don't know the words to describe it, these things were as common as a robin in our ecosystem," Harvell said in an interview. "Never, ever would anyone imagine they would be threatened and endangered. To watch that happen on our watch has been discouraging."

Sea star wasting disease beginning in 2013 caused a massive die-off of starfish of multiple species, from Mexico to Alaska. Hideous to behold, the disease causes starfish to fall apart, with pieces of their arms walking away, or their bodies disintegrating on pilings, beaches, rocks and the seafloor.

The disease also has affected starfish on shores from New Jersey to New England.

The sunflower star continues to decline, even in the deepest ocean, and is not recovering like some other species, such as the ochre star.



TNS
Sunflower starfish—the large, multi-armed starfish sometimes seen underwater at the near shore—are imperiled by disease and ocean warming along the West Coast.

This fish has been called ugly and prehistoric. Here's why Texas wants to protect it

By BILL HANNA
FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAM

FORT WORTH, Texas—They are probably one of the most unique creatures plying Texas waters.

Some have called them ugly and others have described them as prehistoric.

Now, Texas Parks and Wildlife is proposing changes to protect overfishing of large, mature alligator gar as well as a nighttime bowfishing ban.

The proposed regulation changes include a 4-foot maximum length for fish on the Trinity River from south of the Interstate 30 bridge in Dallas all the way to the I-10 bridge in Chambers County east of Houston.

To fishing guide Marshall Bryant the rules are unfair. Bryant is originally from Aledo and takes customers all over Texas in the pursuit of alligator gar.

"They make no sense," Bryant said. "We do have a sustainable alligator gar population and a sustainable amount of trophy alligator gar to harvest."

Bryant has started a petition drive that he says has more than 6,000 signatures to oppose the rule changes.

In a press release, Craig Bonds, TPWD Inland Fisheries Director, said that the parks and wildlife commission "has communicated to us that they would rather, out of an abun-



TNS
The carcass of an alligator gar rests along the shore at the edge of a small pool of red sludge-like water at the base of the dam at O.C. Fisher Lake on July 25, 2011 in San Angelo, Texas. The 5,440 acre lake which was established to provide flood control and serve as a secondary drinking water source for San Angelo and the surrounding communities is now dry following an extended drought in the region. The lake which has a maximum depth of 58 feet is also used for boating, fishing and swimming. The San Angelo area has seen only 2.5 inches of rain this year. The past nine months have been the driest in Texas since record keeping began in 1895, with 75% of the state classified as exceptional drought, the worst level.

dance of caution, act proactively to further limit harvest of older, mature alligator gar while populations are in relatively good shape."

The rule changes will be considered at the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission's March 20 meeting.

Texas Parks and Wildlife would also include a drawing, similar to one in Arkansas, for the chance to harvest one alligator gar over 48 inches in length per year from the Trinity River.

In a letter to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram in June, Fort Worth attorney Ralph Dug-

gins, chairman of the parks and wildlife commission, said alligator gar are worth protecting.

"Alligator gar have been in American river systems for millennia, and we are proud that the largest, and oldest, of these fish exist in river systems of Texas, like the Trinity," Duggins said. "Over 10 years ago, the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission implemented rule changes to try to reduce the harvest of these large fish, and we will continue to study whether or not additional restrictions are appropriate to protect those fish."

ease, allowing it to kill faster and have a bigger impact, said Harvell, author of the forthcoming book "Ocean Outbreak, Confronting the Rising Tide of Marine Disease."

Starfish matter in the ocean—and not only because they are every kid's first friend on the beach. Sunflower stars in

particular prey voraciously on sea urchins—which keeps urchin grazing on kelp forests in check. As sunflower stars crash, urchins surge—and mow down kelp forests. That reduces the waving, green underwater nurseries that young fish need to thrive.

Sunflower stars are the li-

ons of the subtidal zone, big as a manhole cover and with mighty appetites. That is why losing sunflower stars threatens the biodiversity they nurture, said Joe Gaydos, another author on the paper and science director at the SeaDoc Society.

"The cascading effect has a really big impact," Gaydos said.

The crash in sunflower starfish corresponds with ocean warming by up to 4 degrees Celsius that started in 2014. Trawl surveys from Mexico to the Canadian border recorded a total wipeout of sunflower starfish in all states, and in deep water down to 1,000 meters.

Because they live underwater and are not often seen from shore, the sunflower starfish crash has gone unnoticed by comparison with the dripping, oozing horror of the ochre stars on display at every Puget Sound beach and beyond.

IN LOVING MEMORY

Kimberly Ann Diaz Takai

LOVINGLY KNOWN AS

Sesa

In her new life, she now joins her:

Grandparents: †Jose DLG Diaz / †Teresita B. Diaz, †Carmen S. Reyes, †Esteban A. Reyes
Grandparents In-Law: †Roberto M. Tudela / †Vicenta C. Tudela, †Jose D. Takai / †Ana L. Takai

Her memories will forever live in the hearts of her:

Husband: Edwin Tudela Takai
Parents / Step Parents: Virginia Santos Reyes / Paul Delos Santos Castro
 Davie Michael Blas Diaz / Kathy Tenorio Diaz
 Trinidad Tudela Takai / Carlos Lujan Takai
 Edwin S. Takai, Jr. / Jolleen (Tristan John, Chloe-Mae),
 Etsuko S. Takai / Sahara, Jiro S. Takai / Vicki (Joriana, Von),
 Wayne Albert D. Takai, Madison Janae T. Takai
 Kristy Noreen R. Diaz / Tyrone, Kevin Michael R. Diaz / Josephine,
 Davie Michael B. Diaz, II, Steven Joseph R. King, Manny Gregory T. Castro, Vicente Francisco T. Castro
 Joseph R. Diaz and Vincent Teregeyo
 Agapita M. Borja / Joe, Diana T. Takai, Barbara Ann T. Takai,
 Cynthia / Joseph T. Takai, Martin T. Takai / Jackie, Melinda T. Takai,
 Alvin T. Takai, Diego T. Takai

Special Aunts: Debra Amalia Diaz Teregeyo and Lillian S. Reyes
 Antonia Manibusan / Juan Lizama, †James Sablan, Irene Tudela Torres / Joaquin DLG. Torres, MaryJane Tudela / †Luis Tudela

God Parents: Abbie Jane Battung, Anne Marie Demapan-Mauldin, Kina Salas

Special Friends

She will be greatly missed by her numerous aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces and friends.

Daily Mass of intention is being offered at 6:00pm at St. Jude Church, followed by the Holy Rosary, except on Saturday, mass will be offered at 5:30pm. On Sunday, March 03, 2019, mass will be held at 8:00am and the Holy Rosary will be recited at 5:30pm. Funeral Services will be held on Monday, March 4, 2019. Viewing for her immediate family only will take place at 6:30am and her remains will be escorted from Borja Funeral Home to Mt. Carmel Cathedral at 7:30am. Reponsion service and Holy Rosary will take place upon arrival of remains. Mass of Christian burial will be celebrated at 11:00am followed by interment services at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where she will be at a peaceful rest.

*Thank you, Si Yu's Ma'ase
 Edwin Tudela Takai, children and family*

Life & Style

Billy Porter speaks on Oscars gown and social media hate

By LEANNE ITALI

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK (AP)—Billy Porter, speaking to *Vogue* before he walked the Oscars red carpet, knew what he was in for among some social media users:

“People are going to be really uncomfortable with my black ass in a ball gown, but it’s not anybody’s business but mine.”

The remark from the Tony-winning stage performer, actor and singer was both prescient and disproven. There was mega-praise for his velvet custom tuxedo look by Christian Siriano and outrage over the notion that an African American man in a dress was a threat to black masculinity.

It was just the conversation Porter had hoped to provoke, not to collect virulent hate but to help move along the idea that we all deserve respect, across racial lines and the gender divide.

“I was ready to create the conversation,” Porter told The Associated Press in a phone interview Monday the day after the Oscars. “We have to teach people how to treat us, we have to teach people how to love us, we have to teach people how to respect us, and



Billy Porter arrives at the Oscars on Sunday, Feb. 24, 2019, at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles.

AP

the only way we do that is to respect ourselves.”

Porter, the black and gay breakout star of the boundary-expanding FX series “*Pose*,” spent awards season using

fashion as political art, as he describes it. There were previous dresses, and there was help from powerhouses Tom Ford and Michael Kors in the later weeks, along with small-

er designers who embrace a greater gender fluidity in their collections and were thrilled early on to dress him.

As a nominee at the Golden Globes, Porter’s custom trou-

ser look by Randi Rahm, including a huge, hot pink-lined cape and floral embellishments, grabbed attention, but social media support and disdain after the 49-year-old took to the Oscars carpet took the

debate into the stratosphere.

Porter understands where established notions of black masculinity originated, and he understands how toxic they can be. He and his stylist, Sam Ratelle, also realize how rigid gender-driven taboos can be and want to help the walls come down.

“It goes all the way back to the earliest of emasculations, which is slavery, so the only way to sort of overcome that is to be the strongest and the most masculine and the most powerful and now, what has become toxic,” Porter said. “And I don’t think it’s just black people. I think it’s men in general. Every ethnicity has their version of it.”

Porter couldn’t care less about negative comments.

“The comments are not my business. What people think about what I’m doing is not my business. I lived that already,” he said. “I’m inside of my authenticity and the whole point is that you have to respect me as much as I respect you. If you don’t like it, go somewhere else. You don’t have to look. It’s not about you. I don’t understand why my putting on a dress causes this much strife in your life.”

Ratelle said he began working with Porter about a year ago.

US appeals court clears AT&T’s \$81B purchase of Time Warner

WASHINGTON (AP)—A federal appeals court on Tuesday cleared AT&T’s takeover of Time Warner, rejecting the Trump administration’s claims that the \$81 billion deal will harm consumers and reduce competition in the TV industry.

The ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington came in the high-stakes competition case, approving one of the biggest media marriages ever. It was already completed

last spring, soon after a federal trial judge approved it. AT&T, a wireless carrier and TV and home internet provider, absorbed Time Warner, the owner of CNN, HBO, the Warner Bros. movie studio, “*Game of Thrones*,” sports programming and other shows.

Many observers had expected the decision favorable

to AT&T from the three-judge appeals court panel. The decision was unanimous to uphold the trial judge’s June ruling. Opposing the merger forced the Justice Department to argue against standing legal doctrine that favors mergers among companies that don’t compete directly with each other, what’s known as a vertical merger.

The U.S. antitrust lawsuit against Dallas-based AT&T marked the first time in decades that the government has challenged that doctrine by suing to block a vertical merger.

The ruling dealt a major setback to the Trump Justice Department. The department said it won’t appeal the ruling.

Its chances of prevailing at the Supreme Court were considered dim.

“We are grateful that the

Court of Appeals considered our objections to the district court opinion,” spokesman Jeremy Edwards said. “The department has no plans to seek further review.”

The appeals court judges said U.S. District Judge Richard Leon was correct to dismiss the government’s argument that AT&T’s takeover of Time Warner would hurt competition, limit choices and jack up prices for consumers to watch TV and movies.

“The government failed to meet its burden of proof” for its theory that costs for Time Warner’s Turner Broadcasting content would increase after the merger, mainly through threats of programming “blackouts,” the judges wrote. The Turner networks include CNN.

The Justice Department antitrust attorneys had asserted

that Leon misunderstood the complexities of the TV industry and the nature of AT&T’s competitors.

The idea behind the merger was to help AT&T—which claims about 25 million of the 90 million U.S. households that are pay TV customers—compete better with online rivals like Netflix, YouTube and Hulu.

AT&T already had a streaming service, DirecTV Now, but it launched a cheaper offering called WatchTV soon after the deal closed. It’s planning another streaming service, “WarnerMedia,” for later this year.

“The merger of these innovative companies has already yielded significant consumer benefits, and it will continue to do so for years to come,” AT&T General Counsel David McAtee said in a statement.

HANOI, Vietnam (AP)—The stereotype of artists as eccentric is a common one, and the work of Vietnamese artist Tran Lam Binh seems to support that view. Since 2015 he has turned out painting after painting of Donald Trump.

Many can be seen this week in Vietnam’s capital, Hanoi, where Trump is holding a summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Binh has also fashioned a statue of the American president that’s almost 2 meters (6½ feet) tall, more or less life size.

Don’t assume Binh is single-minded, however.

In 2017, he began diversifying his portfolio of roughly 50 depictions of Trump by painting portraits of Kim Jong Un as well.

So this week is kind of a perfect storm for 36-year-old Binh with his two favorite subjects coming to his homeland to discuss peace on the Korean Peninsula.

To mark the event, Binh has created about 10 pop-art portraits of Trump and Kim on canvas and paper in bright pink, blue, orange and yel-

low colors decorated with hearts and the words “Love” and “Peace.”

Binh said he won’t sell the portraits and instead will keep them as a souvenir of the historic event. He may not be turning a profit, but has been reaping a motherlode of publicity as the summit has brought foreign and local media in droves to see him and his work.

Binh started painting Trump portraits in 2015 when the American real estate mogul launched his campaign for the presidency. After Trump’s election victory, Binh staged an exhibition of his works on a sidewalk near the White House.

Binh’s style, with garish colors and casual brush strokes, somewhat recalls the paintings of Canadian comedian Jim Carrey, another Trump obsessive.

Carrey’s barbed caricatures, posted on the internet, make no secret of the fact that he is a fierce critic of Trump and his politics.

Binh, on the other hand, is a fan.

Ghanaian American writer wins \$75,000 award from PEN America

NEW YORK (AP)—A Ghanaian-American’s debut collection of stories has won a \$75,000 prize for a book of “originality, merit, and impact.”

The literary and human rights organization PEN

America announced that Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah’s “*Friday Black*” had received the Jean Stein Book Award. It was presented during a ceremony Tuesday night in Manhattan.

Will Mackin’s “*Bring Out the Dog*” won the \$25,000

PEN/Bingham Award for a best first book of short stories, an honor for which “*Friday Black*” was not nominated. Michelle Tea received a \$10,000 essay writing prize for “*Against Memoir*” and Bernice Yeung’s “*In a Day’s*

Work” won a \$10,000 nonfiction award. A \$10,000 science writing prize was given to Ben Goldfarb’s “*Eager*.” Honorary awards were presented to filmmaker-playwright Kenneth Lonergan and author Sandra Cisneros.

Emma Thompson to Skydance: I won't work with John Lasseter

NEW YORK (AP)—In a letter to Skydance Media, Emma Thompson outlined why she refused to work with the former Pixar executive John Lasseter and was withdrawing from the animated film "Luck."

Thompson departed the project last month shortly after Skydance chief executive David Ellison hired Lasseter, the Pixar co-founder and former Walt Disney Co. animation chief. Lasseter last year was forced out at Disney after

acknowledging "missteps" in his behavior with female employees.

In her letter to Ellison, Thompson said she felt it was "very odd to me that you and your company would consider hiring someone with Mr. Lasseter's pattern of misconduct given the present climate."

"If a man has been touching women inappropriately for decades, why would a woman want to work for him if the only reason he's not touching them inappropri-

ately now is that it says in his contract that he must behave 'professionally'?" wrote Thompson. "If a man has made women at his companies feel undervalued and disrespected for decades, why should

the women at his new company think that any respect he shows them is anything other than an act that he's required to perform by his coach, his therapist and his employment



Thompson

agreement?"

A representative for Thompson confirmed the letter Tuesday, which was first published in The Los Angeles Times. A spokesperson for Skydance declined to comment.

Lasseter's hiring provoked a backlash from some who said the animation executive didn't deserve a second chance so quickly. Time's Up, the non-profit organization formed

to combat sexual harassment and gender inequality in Hollywood and elsewhere, said his hiring "endorses and perpetuates a broken system that allows powerful men to act without consequence."

Shortly after allegations were made against Harvey Weinstein in fall 2017, Lasseter announced that he was taking a six-month "sabbatical" from Disney and apologized "to anyone who has ever been on the receiving end of an unwanted hug" or any other

gesture that made them feel "disrespected or uncomfortable." Lasseter initially said he would return to Disney, but the studio said it was permanently cutting ties last June.

At the time of his hiring, Lasseter, a creative force involved in every Pixar release and numerous Disney hits, said he had spent the last year in "deep reflection, learning how my actions unintentionally made colleagues uncomfortable, which I deeply regret and apologize for."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Spanish court summons Shakira to answer tax evasion charges

MADRID (AP)—A Spanish court investigating Shakira for possibly evading 14.5 million euros (\$16.4 million) in taxes has called on the pop music star to testify in mid-June. Prosecutors charged the singer in December for not paying taxes in Spain between 2012 and 2014, when she lived mostly in the country despite having an official residence in Panama. In their indictment, prosecutors also allege that the Colombian-born singer concealed her income through 14 companies in tax heavens. Shakira's Spanish public relations firm says the singer has settled all her debts with local tax authorities. It says she will testify as required on June 12 at a court in Esplugues de Llobregat, the Barcelona suburb where Shakira lives with soccer player Gerard Pique and the couple's children.

Man forgets valuable Picasso 'owl jug' on German train

BERLIN (AP)—Police in

Germany are appealing for help in finding a valuable ceramic jug made by Pablo Picasso, after its owner lost it on a train. Federal police said Tuesday that the 76-year-old man forgot the jug featuring Picasso's famous owl motif when he changed trains in the western city of Hamm on Feb. 15. Police said the white, black and blue jug was made in Picasso's workshop in Madoura, France, in 1953, and is worth at least 10,000 euros (\$11,355). Train crew was alerted to the loss immediately but the jug remains missing.

Sequel to Michael Crichton's 'Andromeda Strain' due in fall

NEW YORK (AP)—The late Michael Crichton's literary archive and production company has authorized a sequel to his breakthrough novel "The Andromeda Strain." HarperCollins Publishers announced Tuesday that "The Andromeda Evolution" will come out Nov. 12. The book will be a collaboration between science fiction author Daniel H. Wilson and CrichtonSun LLC., for which the

author's widow, Sherri Crichton, serves as CEO. Its publication marks the 50th anniversary of "The Andromeda Strain," Crichton's technothriller about scientists fighting a lethal extraterrestrial microorganism. Released when Crichton was just 27, it was later adapted into a feature film and television miniseries, with Ridley Scott among the producers. Michael Crichton, who died in 2008, is also known for such blockbusters as "Jurassic Park" and "The Terminal Man."

Stephen King, wife give \$1.25M to genealogical society

BOSTON (AP)—The master of the American horror novel has donated \$1.25 million to the masters of American genealogical research. Stephen King and his wife, Tabitha, made the gift through their foundation to the New England Historic Genealogical Society. The Boston-based organization is the nation's oldest and largest genealogical society. It says it will use the gift announced Tuesday to develop educational programming and fund a cur-

riculum in family history for public school students. It will also help the organization expand its headquarters. Brenton Simons is president and CEO of the society. He says the money will have "far-reaching benefits." The society says the Kings have deep personal interest in family and local history and their importance in education.

NBC appoints Jenna Bush Hager co-host on 'Today'

NEW YORK (AP)—Jenna Bush Hager better get her wine glass ready. NBC appointed her Tuesday as co-host of the "Today" show's fourth hour with Hoda Kotb, and she'll replace Kathie Lee Gifford in that role in April. Kotb and Gifford were successful pioneers in expanding "Today," with an irreverent hour where glasses of wine were often kept close by. The daughter of former President George W. Bush has been with the "Today" show for a decade in various roles. NBC News President Noah Oppenheim says in a memo to staff that her

compassion and curiosity comes through in all her stories, along with a Texas-sized sense of humor. The "Today" show's competitor, ABC's "Good Morning America," has also expanded beyond the early-morning hours.

Janet Jackson to launch Las Vegas residency in May

NEW YORK (AP)—Janet Jackson is heading to Las Vegas. The pop icon announced Tuesday that she's launching a residency in Sin City later this year. Jackson will have 15 shows in May, July and August at the Park Theater at Park MGM resort. Tickets for the residency, called Metamorphosis, go on sale Saturday. Jackson, 52, joins a long list of singers who have had residencies in Vegas, including Britney Spears, Lady Gaga, Celine Dion, the Backstreet Boys and Mariah Carey.

Claressa Shields in another boxing 1st on Showtime

NEW YORK (AP)—Claressa Shields is participating

in another first for women's boxing. The two-time Olympic gold medalist and Christina Hammer will be featured in "All Access" episodes on Showtime Sports' social media platforms. Showtime announced Tuesday that the episodes will premiere March 29 and April 5 on SHO Sports YouTube and Facebook pages. Shields and Hammer will fight for the undisputed middleweight championship on April 13, broadcast live on Showtime from Atlantic City, New Jersey. The episodes will show Shields preparing at the U.S. Olympic Training Center in Colorado Springs, Colorado, and Hammer training in Seefeld, Austria. Undefeated Shields (8-0, 2 KOs) and Hammer (24-0, 11 KOs) were supposed to fight on Nov. 17, but Hammer postponed it because of illness. Showtime Sports President Stephen Espinoza says the fight highlights "two of the elite athletes in boxing" in the network's 10th women's bout since 2017. That year, Shields became the first woman to headline a fight card on premium cable.

Dad turns sons into weapons in his bitter breakup with mom

DEAR ABBY: My daughter has two boys who treat her like crap. They swear, call her a b----, whore, liar and the f-word. They break things in her house and have no respect for anyone.

The problem started after she broke up with their biological father and married her new boyfriend. The father brainwashes the boys to do these things to make life a living hell with her new husband.

What I cannot understand is why my daughter goes out of her way to please these two ungrateful kids and still cannot see how they are destroying her present household. This is killing me. What can she do to solve the problem?

ANGRY IN THE WEST

DEAR ANGRY: The first thing your daughter will have to do to solve her problem is acknowledge that there is one, and SHE may be part of it. Then, she will have to quit trying to ingratiate herself with the boys and act more like a parent than a doormat, which means she will have to institute consequences when her sons misbehave and treat her disrespectfully. Unless she is prepared to do that, nothing will change.

DEAR ABBY: My husband is a physician with a heavy call schedule. For years I have struggled with how to RSVP to invitations to cocktail parties and/or dinner. Many times I can go and

would like to attend, but I can't be sure my husband will be able to be there. Many times I decline for us both because I worry that it might be awkward for the host/hostess if I accept for myself, but say I'm "not sure" for my husband. How would you handle this?

REALLY WANTS TO GO IN KANSAS

DEAR REALLY: If I wanted to attend the gathering, I would call my hosts and explain that I would love to come but couldn't guarantee my husband would be able to because of his practice. Then I would add that he might drop by later (if that's feasible). Gracious hosts will welcome you.

DEAR ABBY: I'm a longtime reader and I'm curious. Do you ever receive letters from "the other party"? Has anyone ever read your column, realized the letter is about them and written to tell you their side? Would you ever print it if they did? There are always two sides to every story.

WONDERING IN HOUSTON

DEAR WONDERING: The answer is yes. It happens rarely, but it does happen. Last year I published a letter from a woman who was upset because her ex-husband had promised their daughter a large sum of money for the daughter's wedding. He had told the daughter her mother would pay half the amount. She felt she should have been

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

consulted first. (I agreed.)

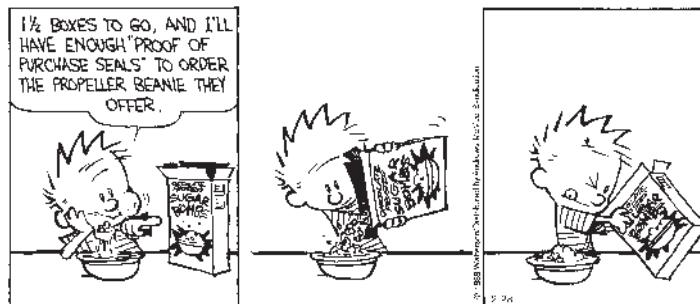
I then heard from the ex-husband, who wanted me to know he had "apologized to her profusely" for not discussing the wedding budget beforehand and that he had offered to lower the budget, but the mother "only wanted to be responsible for paying for the bridal gown." He closed by saying, "I'm not looking to get this published, just thought you'd like to know the other side of the story and allow myself to blow off a little steam." I hope this satisfies your curiosity.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)



Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



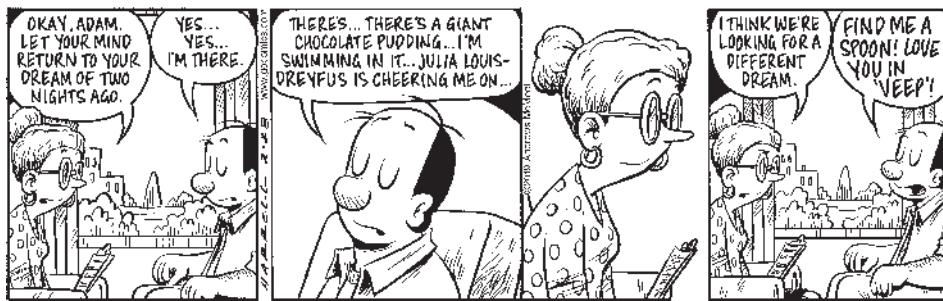
By Bill Waterson

Garfield®



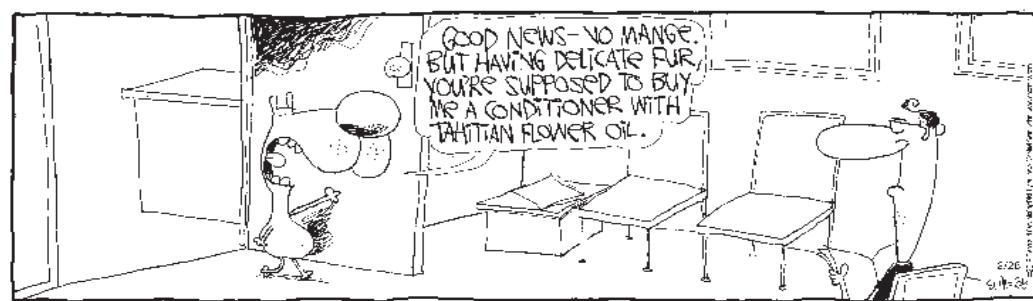
By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

| ACROSS | 34 — Paulo | 54 Perched | 11 Eastern | 11 |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|--------------|
| 1 Earring | 35 Fuel stat | 55 Deco artist | “way” | Pat |
| 5 Smack | 36 Devil’s domain | 19 Central | 21 Consumed | Monahan, 50. |
| 8 Blog entry | 37 Play-goer’s souvenir | 23 Monarchs | 24 Evening, in an ad | |
| 12 Regrettably | 40 Writer Quindlen | 25 Peepers site | 26 Bygone days | |
| 13 Fuss | 41 Short jacket | 4 Jailbreak participant | 27 Exotic berry | |
| 14 “May It Be” singer | 45 Gambling game | 5 Mayhem | 28 “So what?” | |
| 15 Dealer’s foe | 47 Jay follower | 6 Greek mountain | 32 Chimney pipes | |
| 16 Moving-day rental | 49 San —, Italy | 7 Ad nauseam | 33 Maker of ornate eggs | |
| 17 Aviation prefix | 50 Help a crook | 8 Oyster’s prize | 35 Gents | |
| 18 Energetic person | 51 Hosp. sections | 9 Biased | 36 Coloration | |
| 20 Galley supply | 52 Author Sheehy | 10 Aleppo’s land (Abbr.) | 38 Shoelace woes | |
| 22 Strikers’ queue | 53 Striped fish | 39 Secret rendezvous | 42 Dread | |
| 26 Man-handled | | 43 Send forth | 44 Portrayal | |
| 29 Chemical suffix | | 45 “Terrific!” | 46 Lawyers’ gp. | |
| 30 Hobbyist’s abbr. | | 48 Altar constellation | | |

Solution time: 24 mins.



Yesterday's answer 2-28

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Jason Aldean, 42; Ali Larter, 43; Eric Lindros, 46; Pat Monahan, 50.

Happy Birthday: You've got what it takes to turn this into your year. Stick to your goals, and don't stop until you feel satisfied with what you've accomplished. Your determination and desire will separate you from any competition you face. Your ability to get others to help you using fair incentives will turn you into a leader. Romance is highlighted. Your numbers are 2, 7, 19, 22, 28, 36, 45.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Consider what you want to do, but don't lose sight of what others are doing. Protect your reputation, but pay close attention to detail. Take care of your responsibilities personally. Leave nothing to chance, and positive change can happen. ☀

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Drum up some energy and take charge. A business trip or meeting with someone who can make a difference in achieving your goals will bring excellent results. Know what you want, and don't be afraid to ask. ☀

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep a close watch over what others do and say. Don't get caught in someone else's problems or fibs. If you want to make a change, be secretive until you have everything in place and ready to launch. ☀

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Use charm and intelligence to persuade others to help you get what you want. Your willingness to do your share will prompt others to

pitch in and help. Emotional matters can be resolved, and romance will improve your personal life. ☀

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Stick to a fixed price. It's fine to have aspirations, but if you cannot afford to follow through, make adjustments that fit your budget. Don't let anger take over when being innovative is what's required. ☀

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Network, participate and share ideas and plans to see what transpires. Having a goal and taking the initiative to make it happen will promote success as well as new beginnings. Love and romance are on the rise. ☀

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be careful how you handle domestic situations. You will face opposition and demanding people if you are too pushy or if you overspend. A change may not be welcome, but in the end, it will relieve stress and help you move forward. ☀

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): A change will do you good. Discuss personal plans with someone who is heading in the same direction. Make the most of connecting with like-minded people and developing a closer bond to someone you love. ☀

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Change begins within, so don't rely on someone else to make changes for you. Someone who uses emotional tactics to manipulate your decisions will disappoint you. Trust in yourself and your abilities, not someone else. Truth matters. ☀

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Use charm and intelligence to persuade others to help you get what you want. Your willingness to do your share will prompt others to

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY



COURTESY 2007 UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Pour your energy into things that matter to you. Home, family and your relationships with others should be at the forefront of your mind when making decisions that will affect how or where you live. Ask for input. ☀

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Proceed with caution. You may want to make changes, but before you do, consider the outcome. Focus on how best to make a difference, not only for yourself, but for those in your community, circle or family. Do what's right. ☀

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Consider what you want. Make the changes that will represent the results you want to achieve. Be bold and ask for whatever you need to be successful. Having a solid plan will encourage others to take part and support your ideas. ☀

Birthday Baby: You are insightful, goal-oriented and proactive. You are a thinker and a dreamer.

To submit astrological questions to the "Dear Eugenia" column, visit Eugenialast.com, or join Eugenia on Twitter/Facebook/LinkedIn.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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Difficulty Level ★★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 5 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 8 | |
| 4 | 7 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 1 | |
| 2 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 9 | |
| 6 | 5 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 3 | |
| 9 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 7 | |
| 3 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 4 | 5 | |
| 7 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 8 | 6 | |
| 8 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 5 | 7 | 4 | |
| 1 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 2 | |
| 8 | | | | | | | | | |

Difficulty Level ***

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backwords. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

BUTTERMILK BISCUITS

Solution: 8 letters

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| G | T | E | R | U | T | X | I | M | S | E | L | P | P | A |
| E | N | B | W | O | L | N | D | E | T | L | E | M | I | |
| O | V | I | A | T | A | O | C | O | K | S | R | A | R | |
| O | A | R | F | E | E | B | V | I | C | I | R | O | Y | |
| R | M | T | E | F | D | P | E | R | A | P | L | T | F | |
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| V | T | I | P | S | O | O | T | S | F | L | O | U | R | |
| E | Y | V | A | R | G | L | A | T | S | U | R | C | B | |

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2/28

Airy, Apples, Apricot, Bacon, Beef, Bowl, Bread, Breakfast, Butter, Cheddar, Chive, Coat, Cook, Crisp, Crust, Cutter, Edges, Eggs, Flaky, Flour, Fluffy, Glaze, Golden, Gravy, Honey, Jam, Layers, Light, Love, Melted, Mixture, Moist, Oats, Pastry, Preserve, Rise, Roast, Roll, Salad, Sausage, Sliders, S'mores, Soft, Sour, Steam, Stew, Store, Stuffing, Sugar, Tall, Teas, Tips, Turkey, Warm

Yesterday's Answer: Encyclopedias

The NEW Volume 65 can be purchased online at: www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5956 99¢ per minute, touchtone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
Medical Sales Representative

Job Duties:

Arrange meetings and appointments with clients, promote company's products and services, build and maintain a positive work relationship with clients, suppliers and manufacturers, prepare and submit weekly activity reports, monthly progress reports and quarterly sales reports and marketing plans. Keep a detailed and organized record of clients and contacts. Maintain an organized record of all sales activities. Stay informed about the activities of clinics, hospitals and other health care.

Qualification Requirements:

Bachelor's Degree in Finance, Biomedical Engineering or related science and medical field. Work experience in sales for a minimum of 3 years in medical field: strong interpersonal and communication skills; highly proficient in the use of Microsoft office applications; Independent and requires less supervision; must have a valid CNMI driver's license; aggressive and hardworking.

Interested applicants may email a copy of their resume and police clearance to ruth.feril@medpharmusa.net or fax to 670-235-5418.

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT
WINCHELL'S DONUTS

1 vacancy for **Store Manager**. Wage per hour depends on qualifications. Must be college level and has at least 1 year of continued experience in managing bakery operations; must have knowledge in operating cash register or POS system; must be customer-service oriented, computer literate and confident in doing basic mathematical skills. Capability of conversing in basic Japanese or other foreign languages is highly preferred.

6 vacancies for **Donut Makers/Bakers**. Wage ranges from \$7.25/hr to \$8.50/hr. Must be a high school graduate with a few months to 1 year experience in baking; must be able to read, write and speak basic English; must be capable of lifting at least 50lbs and has basic mathematical skills. Capability of conversing in basic Japanese and other foreign languages is highly preferred.

Additional requirements: All applicants must be of good health with good moral character. Must be able to follow grooming standards; provide current health certificate. Must have reliable transportation and willing to undergo drug test.

Please email your resume to jobapplicant2014@gmail.com



Saipan Seventh-day Adventist School

Is requesting applicants for:

(2) Child Development Center/
Pre-School Teachers

- Minimum two years experience working with young children in a school setting (18 months through 4 years of age)
- Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree
- CPR/First Aid Certified
- Knowledge of child development and curriculum
- Must be a member in good standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church
- Willing to adhere to all school policies and procedures

(1) Maintenance Supervisor

- Minimum two years of general maintenance experience and supervision
- Knowledge of plumbing, electrical, building construction, and general maintenance
- Must be a member in good standing of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

Send resumes to: **Saipan SDA School Principal**

P.O. Box 501063 Saipan MP 96950
principal@saipansdaschool.org

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Perform daily "auditing tasks", such as counting products to verify the correct inventory quantity. Ensures products are not damaged and document and report any damaged products or inventory discrepancies to immediate superior. File and retrieving reconciliation documents as well as other clerical or administrative duties. Handle physical receiving and issuing of goods, loading and unloading of goods, allocate merchandise from warehouse to store, set up and maintain the distribution requirements by store and corresponding assortment, manage and maintain a clear, accurate and organized database, manage distribution of discontinued and/or end of seasonal merchandise to effectively liquidate the inventory, perform daily cycle counting, prepare delivery orders. Perform other related duties and responsibilities as required or as needed.

Requires: High School Diploma or GED with at least six (6) months retail experience and at least three (3) months of prior receiving, stocking and inventory experience. Must be proficient in Microsoft Office applications (Excel, MS Word, Outlook, Power Point). Knowledge on the following equipment: POS terminal, photocopier/faximile machine, and other items as necessary to accomplish assigned tasks. Must be able to lift at least 15-pound items and carry it for at least 100 yards, with or without using a trolley, and move up to 50-pound items using a trolley. Must be able to drive Company provided vehicles safely. Must be able to bend, kneel, crouch, or crawl in awkward positions. Must be able and willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends.

Interested applicants may obtain employment application forms from the Front Office of Century Tours, Inc., located on the ground floor of the Kanoa Resort on Beach Road in Susupe Village, Saipan. Offices are open Sunday-Saturday from 9 AM-6 PM. Applications or resumes may also be submitted via email to gemkell_recruitment@tanholdings.com or posted online under the JVs on the CNMI Department of Labor Website. To be considered, resumes or application documents must be submitted not later than **6:00PM on Monday, March 9, 2019**. Drug testing is required prior to employment and background checks will be required prior to employment.

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Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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All advertising in the Saipan Tribune are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, Saipan Tribune reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

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Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

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Find today's solution in classified section

Arenado, Rockies reach \$260M, 8-year deal

D E N V E R (AP)—Nolan Arenado likes where he's at and the direction the Colorado Rockies are headed.

So he's staying put. For possibly a long, long time. And for a chance to finish what this team has been brewing.

The All-Star third baseman and Rockies agreed to an eight-year contract on Tuesday, and a person familiar with the negotiations told The Associated Press the deal is worth \$260 million. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the dollar value hasn't been publicly announced.

Arenado's agreement includes a provision that allows him to opt out after three years and become a free agent.

Arenado's \$32.5 million average annual value is the second-highest in baseball history behind the \$34.42 million for pitcher Zack Greinke in a \$206.5 million contract with Arizona that began in 2016. Arenado's deal replaces a \$26 million, one-year contract he agreed to Jan. 31.

Arenado, who turns 28 on April 16, was on track to be eligible for free agency after this season. But there's comfort in remaining at Coors Field, especially in these uncertain days of free agency that have seen Manny Machado unsigned until last week and Bryce Harper still searching for a team with exhibition games underway.

That hasn't been lost on Arenado, who recently said: "There are some really good baseball players out there, and it is crazy to think some of these teams don't need them. They need them."

The Rockies are trending up after making the postseason in back-to-back seasons, a franchise first. Even more, they nearly captured the team's first NL West title before losing in a tiebreaker at Los Angeles in Game No. 163. The Rockies advanced by beating the Chicago Cubs in the NL wild-card game. They were swept by Milwaukee in the Division Series after hitting .146 against the Brewers and scoring in just one of 28 innings.

New season. A new chapter for a team that's been to the World Series just once — in 2007, when the Rockies were swept by Boston.

Known for his big bat and his highlight-reel plays at third, Arenado has been the face of the franchise for years. He's earned a Gold Glove in each of his six major league seasons. A second-round pick by the Rockies in the 2009 amateur draft, Arenado is a career .291 hitter with 186



This Sept. 21, 2018, file photo shows Colorado Rockies third baseman Nolan Arenado in the first inning during a baseball game against the Arizona Diamondbacks in Phoenix.

that I can see myself as a better fit and no team that I'd rather see myself playing for than the St. Louis Cardinals," Mikolas said.

St. Louis made the announcement at the Cardinals spring training facility, a few miles from where Mikolas played his high school baseball. Growing up he attended many St. Louis spring training games.

The 30-year-old is getting \$7.5 million this year as part of a contract he signed before the 2018 season. He would have been eligible for free agency after this year's World Series.

He gets a \$5 million signing bonus, of which \$1 million is payable within 30 days of the contract's approval by the commissioner's office and \$1 million each Jan. 15 from 2020-23. He gets \$15.75 million salaries annually from 2020-23, and if he pitches 200 innings this year his pay under the new deal would increase by \$500,000 each season.

Mikolas returned from three seasons with the Yomiuri Giants in Japan's Central League and tied for the NL lead in wins, going 18-4 with a 2.83 ERA.

"Clearly, how Miles pitched last year, he ended up being the anchor of our rotation," St. Louis president of baseball operations John Mozeliak said. "I think when you combine his skill with his leadership and really his ability to help mentor young players it just seemed like as we looked to the future he was that natural person to take that next step to carry that for the St. Louis Cardinals."

If Mikolas' 2019 performance is similar to what he did last year, he likely would have received far more as a free agent next offseason. Free agent pitcher Patrick Corbin received a \$140 million, six-year contract from Washington as a free agent this offseason.

A seventh-round selection by San Diego in the 2009 amateur draft, Mikolas pitched in relief for the Padres in parts of the 2012 and 2013 before being traded to Pittsburgh and then Texas. When the Rangers released Mikolas following the 2014 season he headed to Japan.

"That was a leap saying, hey, I'm going to go there and I'm going to be the best Japanese baseball player I can be and see where that leads me," Mikolas said.

home runs, 616 RBIs and an .886 OPS.

In 2018, Arenado batted .297 with an NL-leading 38 homers last season, finishing third in MVP voting.

"Obviously, they wanted to keep a homegrown player with them," Los Angeles Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "It's a nice deal for him and a nice deal for the team. So it is good for the game and it makes our job a lot tougher."

This marked the second deal worked out by the front office

this week. The team also announced a three-year contract extension for manager Bud Black through 2022.

Over the offseason, the Rockies gave their offense a boost by bringing in Daniel Murphy to play first base. That means Ian Desmond will head to the outfield. They'll rely heavily on youngsters such as Garrett Hampson, Ryan McMahon or Brendan Rodgers at second base after the departure of DJ LeMahieu to the New York Yankees.

That sentiment became a reality.

Colorado boasts a young rotation led by Kyle Freeland and German Marquez that's filled with promise.

Arenado, though, will be the driving force.

"It's pretty safe to say he makes every team he's on even better," outfielder Charlie Blackmon said in the offseason of Arenado's presence. "I really hope that's with the Rockies for years and years to come."

That data is being given to MLB, teams will also be able to scout the Atlantic League much easier. That could present more opportunities for players in the Atlantic League to get noticed by MLB teams, which means the Atlantic League would become the preferred destination for independent-league players.

While players who sign in the Atlantic League should be scouted more often by MLB teams, they'll be playing in a league that uses drastically different rules. The Atlantic League is full of former MLB veterans who are used to the traditional game. The rule changes could be a big departure for those players.

No matter where you stand on those rule changes, this is the best way for MLB to break them in. While that data might lead to some radical rule proposals later, it should rule out plenty of ideas that would actively damage the game too.

Report: MLB to test robot as umpire

Major League Baseball is going to test whether robot umps or moving back the pitching mound is worth a shot. The league agreed to a unique partnership with the Atlantic League that will allow MLB to test experimental new rules, according to Baseball America.

The league announced its new partnership with the Atlantic League — an independent league — on Tuesday. In its press release, MLB said the Atlantic League will "permit MLB to test experimental playing rules and equipment." MLB did not go into specifics on what experimental rules and equipment will come to the Atlantic League.

However, reports have

suggested they will include moving back the mound and installing robot umps, according to Baseball America.

The partnership provides plenty of advantages for both sides. For MLB, it gives the league an opportunity to test out drastic rule changes without drawing the ire of its own teams. Making those changes in the minors, for example, would be nearly impossible. As Baseball America explained, major-league teams would not be happy about their best prospects suddenly throwing on a mound that was not 60-feet, six inches away from the plate.

The Atlantic League receives state of the art equipment from MLB to gather

Mikolas gets \$68M, 4-year deal from Cards

In Florida, three days after being announced as the Cardinals opening-day starter, Miles Mikolas agreed to stay in St. Louis much longer.

St. Louis and the All-Star right-hander agreed to a \$68 million, four-year contract covering 2020-23, a deal announced Tuesday that raises his pay to \$75.5 million over the next five seasons.

"Going forward in my baseball career there isn't a team

ers and the league, especially considering the rumored rule changes for the Atlantic League are far more extreme.

While players who sign in the Atlantic League should be scouted more often by MLB teams, they'll be playing in a league that uses drastically different rules. The Atlantic League is full of former MLB veterans who are used to the traditional game. The rule changes could be a big departure for those players.

No matter where you stand on those rule changes, this is the best way for MLB to break them in. While that data might lead to some radical rule proposals later, it should rule out plenty of ideas that would actively damage the game too.

US still favored in Women's World Cup

PARIS—The Women's World Cup countdown has begun in earnest.

Wednesday marks 100 days until kickoff for the game's biggest tournament, opening on June 7 in Paris. The 24-team event will be played at nine stadiums in France over the course of a month, with the final set for July 7 in Lyon.

The United States is the defending champion, having won the 2015 World Cup in Canada. The top-ranked Americans are also the presumptive favorites this time around.

So far, ticket sales have been strong, with more than 330,000 of an allotment of 1.3 million sold following the ticket package launch and the presale phase. Single-match tickets go on sale March 7.

According to FIFA, 57 percent of the sales have been in France, while 25 percent have been to fans in the United States.

There are a few lingering controversies hanging over the event, including prize money. Last October, the FIFA Council raised the prize money from \$15 million in 2015 to \$30 million in France. But by contrast, the prize pool for the men's World Cup in Russia last year was \$400 million.

In 2015, the U.S. women received \$2 million for raising the trophy, and the winner this summer will earn \$4 million. The French men, who won their World Cup, earned \$38 million.

While the men's World Cup generates far more revenue, critics say FIFA should back up its pledges to grow the women's game with investment and incentives — like a sweeter prize pool.

"We need to try to find what is the most balanced way, and I think we made a step and there will be many more steps going ahead," FIFA President Gianni Infantino vowed when the increase was announced.

Another issue is timing. FIFA has been criticized for scheduling the Women's World Cup final on the same day as the men's Copa America final and the CONCACAF Gold Cup final.

Here are some other things to watch in the 100 days leading up to the World Cup.

VIDEO WATCH

The next Women's World Cup milestone for FIFA is confirming the use of video review.

The prospect of VAR in France looked in doubt as FIFA prevaricated when asked if women's players would benefit from the same technology as debuted at the men's World Cup in Russia last year. But FIFA confirmed its



In this Aug. 31, 2018, file photo, United States' Alex Morgan tries to control the ball during the first half of an international friendly soccer match against Mexico in Carson, Calif. AP

Women's World Cup referees were training with VAR earlier this month. The FIFA Council has to ratify the use of VAR at a meeting in Miami next month.

LAST-MINUTE CHANGES

Australia shocked many with January's dismissal of coach Alen Stajcic, who had been coach of the Matildas since 2014 and still had nine months left on his contract.

The Australian federation said it fired Stajcic following an internal review and Ante Milicic was named to take over through the World Cup.

Milicic is not the only one jumping aboard a team so late in the process. Cameroon coach Joseph Ndoko was replaced by Alain Djemba in January. Known as the Lions, Cameroon advanced to the knockout round in Canada but the team has struggled recently with preparation for France.

The move was somewhat of a surprise because Ndoko had guided the team to a third-place finish at the Women's Africa Cup of Nations late last year, qualifying Cameroon for the World Cup.

TUNING UP

The 100-day mark also means teams are going all-in on preparation for the event. The United States is hosting the SheBelieves Cup with Japan, England and Brazil—all World Cup-bound teams—starting on Wednesday. There's also the annual Algarve Cup in Portugal, which

starts Thursday and features Canada, Sweden, Spain and several other teams.

Australia is hosting the inaugural Cup of Nations, which will also include New Zealand, Argentina and South Korea, starting Thursday.

"We've got eight games left," U.S. coach Jill Ellis said Tuesday about the remaining schedule. "Every minute we can

get the players together to forge those relationships is really important."

But there's far more urgency for teams that normally don't have many regular exhibition games. Chile and Jamaica, who will each make their World Cup debut in France, will play a pair of matches in Jamaica, with the first on Thursday in Kingston.

"Chile have played Brazil

and Italy recently, therefore we'll get an opportunity to measure where we are as a team," Jamaica coach Hue Menzies told reporters last week. The Reggae Girls, ranked No. 53 in the world, are also expected to play a friendly against Panama as the team prepares for the World Cup.

FOCUS

U.S. goalkeeper Alyssa Nae-

Combine snubs can look to Lindsay for inspiration



DENVER (AP)

—More than 330 of college football's finest players are gathering in Indianapolis this week for the NFL's annual combine, where they'll be poked and prodded, timed and tested, quizzed and questioned.

Not all the players who will get drafted in April are on the invite list.

The combine simply can't accommodate all worthy candidates, and some prospects will work their way into teams' draft plans via their impressive pro day performances or private team workouts in the coming weeks.

Emblematic of the inexact science of projecting which players will succeed in the pros is this: Super Bowl 53 featured 30 undrafted players on the rosters of the New England Patriots (16) and Los Angeles Rams (14).

More than a third of the 300-plus players invited to the combine last year didn't get draft-

ed, whereas 38 players who weren't at the combine did.

Among them were P.J. Hall, a defensive tackle from Sam Houston State who was drafted by Oakland in the second round, and two players from Southern Miss: defensive back Tavarious Moore, a 49ers' third-rounder, and running back Ito Smith, a fourth-round selection by Atlanta.

The biggest snub last year was Colorado running back Phillip Lindsay, the first undrafted offensive rookie ever selected to the Pro Bowl.

Lindsay understandably has chips on both shoulders, one for going uninvited to the combine and the other for going undrafted altogether, and he figures one had plenty to do with the other.

"Oh yeah, it's disrespectful. But it fueled my fire and got me here to where I am today," Lindsay said. "Maybe I wasn't meant to go to the combine."

Miffed that John Elway had used a seventh-round se-

lection on Arkansas running back David Williams, whose career numbers over four years with the Razorbacks didn't even add up to Lindsay's senior stats, the Colorado native nearly took the Baltimore Ravens' offer before calling back and accepting the Broncos' proposal.

"But I'm going to win the starting job," Lindsay added as he hung up on his new employer, vowing to beat out Williams, third-round pick Royce Freeman, incumbent Devontae Booker, and anyone else they would bring in.

At 5-foot-8, Lindsay was accustomed to the underdog role, so he was ready to put his immeasurable attributes such as desire and hustle up against anyone's bench press, 40-yard dash or vertical jump.

"It comes down to heart,"

Lindsay said. "It comes down to you not sitting here and letting people tag you as something. They're sitting here telling you this is who you are. How dare somebody

tell you this is who you are? That's why it's funny when these commentators tell you he's going this round or he's not this, he's not that.

"We don't sit here and critique how they talk on TV, and a lot of time what they're talking about, it's stupid."

Lindsay rushed for 1,037 yards and nine touchdowns as a rookie. Only a wrist injury denied him a shot at breaking Dominic Rhodes' record of 1,104 yards for undrafted rookie running backs, set in 2001.

Notable players who aren't among the 338 invited to Indy this year include Nebraska running back Devine Ozigbo, Georgia State receiver Penny Hart, Utah State running back Darwin Thompson, Cincinnati defensive tackle Cortez Broughton, and North Carolina receiver Anthony Ratliff-Williams.

Lindsay is pulling for every one of them to have a rookie season like he did. He's proud to serve as an I-told-you-so example for all this year's snubs.

Jokic scores 36, powers Nuggets past Thunder



DENVER (AP)—Nikola Jokic scored 36 points, including five free throws in the final moments, and the Denver Nuggets fended off Oklahoma City's late rally for a 121-112 victory Tuesday night in a matchup between two of the top three teams in the Western Conference standings.

Jokic added 10 assists and nine rebounds to finish just shy of his 13th triple-double this season for the Nuggets who won their fifth straight and ninth in a row at home. They improved to 3-0 against the Thunder this season, clinching the four-game season series between the Northwest Division rivals.

Will Barton added 23 points and Jamal Murray 20 for Denver, which extended its division lead over the Thunder to four games.

Paul George had 25 points to lead Oklahoma City which fought back from an 18-point deficit in the second half but could not sustain its rally in the late going.

Russell Westbrook finished an assist shy of a triple-double with 22 points, 14 rebounds and nine assists. Jerami Grant added 21 points.

Oklahoma City got back into the game by turning up its defense, forcing five turnovers in six Denver possessions in one stretch, to pull into a 97-all tie on a 3-pointer by Dennis Schroder with 6:02 left to play.

Westbrook followed by hitting a 3-pointer to give the Thunder its first lead since early in the first half.

Denver, though, fought back, retaking the lead on a 3-pointer by Murray.

The game remained tight down the stretch. Murray hit another 3-pointer and Jokic put in a layup around a Westbrook layup for a 112-106 Denver lead with 1:36 remaining. Jokic helped Denver solidify its lead and quash Oklahoma City's comeback in the final moments by making five of six free throws to boost the Nuggets' advantage to 117-108 with 44 seconds remaining.

Trailing by 13 at the half, the Thunder scored the first eight points of the third quarter, including 3-pointers by Westbrook and George to equal the number of 3s Oklahoma City had in the first half. But the Nuggets' got going on offense again and pulled in front by as many as 18 points before George hit a 3-pointer from the half-court line as the Thunder pulled to 91-78 going into the fourth quarter.

Jokic connected on successive 3-pointers in the last 56 seconds of the second quarter, and Denver moved in front 64-51 at the half.



AP

Denver Nuggets center Nikola Jokic, front, competes for control of a rebound against Oklahoma City Thunder center Steven Adams during the second half of an NBA basketball game Tuesday, Feb. 26, 2019, in Denver. The Nuggets won, 121-112.

Raptors 118, Celtics 95

In Toronto, a lack of togetherness is turning into big trouble for the struggling Boston Celtics.

Pascal Siakam scored 25 points, Kawhi Leonard had 21 and the Toronto Raptors used a huge second quarter to rout Boston.

Marcus Morris scored 17 points, and Jayson Tatum and Terry Rozier each had 11 as Boston lost for the fifth time in seven games. The Celtics are 0-3 since play resumed following the All-Star break.

"We have to be a lot more connected as a team," Celtics coach Brad Stevens said. "That's been the theme for a while."

Celtics guard Marcus Smart echoed his coach's assessment.

"Nobody is together," Smart said. "We've got to have everybody on the same page doing the same things at the same time."

Still, Celtics guard Kyrie Irving wasn't on the same page when asked to respond to Smart's comments.

"That's Marcus' opinion," Irving said, declining to answer after being asked whether he agreed with his teammate

Irving also had little to say about Stevens' comment that Boston is taking too many "shortcuts" on defense.

"I don't know," Irving said. "It's up to Brad."

Irving scored seven points.

It was his lowest-scoring game since he had three points against Detroit on Oct. 27.

Serge Ibaka scored 14 points and Norm Powell added 11 as Toronto extended its home winning streak over Boston to eight. The Celtics have not won in Canada since a 117-116 overtime victory on April 4, 2015.

Kyle Lowry had 11 assists and Toronto led by as many as 31, turning the game around by outscoring Boston 36-13 in the decisive second.

"Everything they did took us out of what we wanted to do," Boston's Al Horford said.

The Raptors have won 15 of 17 at home, where they're 26-6 overall.

Toronto made 17 3-pointers, one shy of a season-high. Siakam matched his career-best by connecting four times in five attempts from long range.

The Celtics led 32-30 after one quarter and scored the opening points of the second, but the Raptors answered with an 18-0 run to lead 48-34 at 7:14. Leonard's fast break dunk at 3:06 put Toronto up by 20, 59-39.

"We locked in a little more," Siakam said. "We got some stops. Obviously, when we get stops we're dangerous in transition."

The Celtics had twice as many turnovers in the second quarter (eight) as made baskets (four).

Knicks 108, Magic 103

In New York, if the Knicks are supposed to be tanking, someone forgot to tell their back-ups.

Emmanuel Mudiay, Mitchell Robinson and the rest of the New York Knicks who came off the bench outscored the Orlando Magic's reserves by a whopping 75-7 in a win at Madison Square Garden.

Mudiay finished with 19 points and Robinson added 17 points, 14 rebounds, six blocks, and three steals to help the Knicks win their second straight game at home after they dropped 18 in a row at MSG.

Robinson joined Ralph Sampson (1984) and David Robinson (1989) as the only rookies to post those numbers in a game since blocks became an official stat in 1973-73.

"He's making history right now," said Knicks Coach David Fizdale. "Every single day he continues to grow and get better. His impact on the defensive end is special. The guy is blocking jumpers. He's guarding guards."

The Knicks never led in the game until Robinson's free throw with 2:57 remaining put New York in front 101-100.

Henry Ellison followed with a 3-pointer and Mudiay hit two free throws with 33 seconds left. Ellison, who is

on a 10-day contract and was only appearing in his second game with the Knicks, played 36 minutes off the bench and finished with 13 points, nine rebounds and five assists.

"Coach Fiz left me in there for a while," Ellison said. "I looked back a couple of times because I didn't expect it. He just gave me an opportunity to go out there and play. It was a lot of fun. I couldn't tell you the last time I played 36

minutes."

Terrence Ross' 3-pointer with 28 second remaining brought the Magic within three. Alfonzo Trier, another back-up, then hit two free throws five seconds later for the final margin. He finished with 18 points.

"Coach is doing what he does with the lineup based on how he feels during the game and he had the whole bench together and it worked tonight," Trier explained.

Shaq calls out LeBron's teammates on trade talks

LOS ANGELES—The dysfunction of the Los Angeles Lakers has reached new heights.

Following public trade-deadline talks that exposed every Laker not named LeBron James as expendable, Los Angeles has lost four of five games and looks increasingly like a team that's going to miss the playoffs.

One of those losses came against the very team at the center of the trade talks, the New Orleans Pelicans. They just so happened to be playing without Anthony Davis that night.

Two games later, the Lakers hit a new season low in an ugly loss to the Memphis Grizzlies, calling out Rajon Rondo by name.

The loss prompted James to call out his teammates for "allowing distractions to affect the way you play."

The struggles have prompted some former prominent Lakers players to join James in criticizing his teammates, most notably Shaquille O'Neal.

O'Neal took James' teammates to task on the TNT set on Tuesday, basically telling them to man up in the aftermath of trade talks.

"It's no time to sit and sulk," O'Neal said. "If you don't want to be traded or you don't want to be talked about, step up. LeBron is used to playing with guys who hit shots and make him look good. He's not having that right now."

O'Neal went on to cite his experience as a journeyman player late in his Hall of Fame career.

"Look, I was traded six times," O'Neal said. "I never cried about it. You move on. It's the business of basketball. If you want to be a guy who doesn't get traded, you've got to step up. Period."

To be clear, O'Neal wasn't traded six times. The Lakers traded him to the Miami Heat, the Heat traded him to the Phoenix Suns

and the Suns traded him to the Cleveland Cavaliers for a total of three trades in his career. He left the Orlando Magic for the Lakers and the Cavs for the Boston Celtics as a free agent.

But O'Neal's point stands. It sucks to know that your team would consider trading you, but it's part of the business. Part of being a professional is recognizing that fact.

O'Neal wasn't the only Hall of Fame Laker with harsh words for James' teammates.

James Worthy joins in

James Worthy took the Lakers to task after the loss to the Grizzlies, calling out Rajon Rondo by name.

"It just seems like there's some type of virus going on with this team right now," Worthy said. "Rondo, he's not mentally in the game. I've seen him play over the years. I know when he's on and when he's not. He was just pretty much going through the motions tonight. Very detrimental to his team. I know this team is better than this. I know they can play better than this. They're losing to the worst teams in the league. Right now, the word that I think as far as playoffs is very bleak."

What now?

The Lakers sit at 11th place in the Western Conference standings, three games behind the San Antonio Spurs for the last postseason berth with competitive Sacramento Kings and Minnesota Timberwolves teams above them fighting for the playoffs.

Right now, the Lakers look anything but competitive. Unless something changes in the DNA of the team in fast fashion, bleak is the best way to describe the outlook for the rest of the Lakers season.

This was not the vision when James joined the Lakers in last offseason's blockbuster move to L.A.

Woods, Mickelson lead strong field at Bay Hill



Following Arnold Palmer's death, the fate of his eponymous tournament was in doubt. The strength of the field had begun to waver, and without the presence of the King, officials worried the event had lost its clout.

Those worries, at least for 2019, have been alleviated.

The annual Bay Hill event—already boasting commits from eight-time winner Tiger Woods, defending champ Rory McIlroy, Justin Rose and Bryson DeChambeau—added three more marquee names to the field on Tuesday in Brooks Koepka, Jason Day and Phil Mickelson.

Of particular interest is Mickelson. Though the 48-year-old won the API in 1997, this marks the first time since 2013 that Mickelson will tee it up in Orlando. What this means for his status at the Players Championship—the five-time major winner said

he may skip the tour's flagship event—is unknown.

Day is also a former Arnold Palmer Invitational champ, winning the event in 2016. Koepka has made three appearances at Bay Hill, his best finish a T-26 in 2014.

The API field now has 13 of the world's Top 20 players, and six of the Top 10.

Johnson to take No. 1 ranking

Meanwhile, Justin Rose awoke yesterday to discover that his latest reign as world No 1 will last only seven more days. But the Englishman will have the chance to win back the crown next week.

Dustin Johnson's emphatic victory on Sunday at the WGC-Mexico Championship was not enough to see him reclaim top spot when the rankings were updated. But thanks to the vagaries of the system—which is based on a two-year period

With another lopsided loss, Agape 2 has yet to enter the win column after five games.

In other results, Saipan International School defeated Grace Christian Academy at the Eagles' court in Navy Hill, 56-40.

Geckos co-captains A.J. Hudkins and Kuu Nishimura teamed up in handing SIS the double-digit winning margin after scoring 19 and 13 points, respectively. The Eagles drew 13 from Ryan Choi and 10 from Steven Balakrishna, but these were not enough, as GCA failed to overcome SIS' team play.

The Geckos improved their record to 2-2, bouncing back from a tough loss to MCS 1, while the Eagles fell to a 2-3 card.

Meanwhile, GCA takes on MCS 1 today at 4:30pm at the Koblerville Gymnasium, while at 3:30pm, the Lady Eagles and Lady Knights collide. In the other boys division match, Agape 2 will try to end its losing skid when it challenges Kagman High School (3-1).

Agape 1 notched its third win after showing no mercy to sister team Agape 2, 127-30.

Kobe Yang extended his streak of firing 20-plus points to three games, as he finished with 26 markers to lead all scorers in the match played at the Torchbearers court in Gualo Rai. Silas Xu and Jonathan Xiong also did damage for Agape 1, as they netted 21 points apiece in the easy win.

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"Our athletes always give their best effort in training and competition, while our coaches play a critical role in developing these talents. Plus, we have our supporters/sponsors who tirelessly work with us in running our program. These are the key pieces to our success," he added.

Sprinter Jacque Wonenberg led NMA's dominance in the NMSA yearly banquet after collecting five Female Student Athlete of the Year awards—the most (student) in CNMI history and she did it in consecutive years. The Marianas High School grad-

—Johnson will leapfrog Rose next Monday and reassume a position he last held in October.

Certainly Johnson seemed the dominant player in beating McIlroy by five shots at Club de Golf Chapultepec, with five back to the next players in the elite event. It was the 34-year-old's second win in four events and he became only the

fifth player in the past 50 years to reach 20 PGA Tour wins before the age of 35, putting him in the company of Woods, Mickelson, Johnny Miller and Tom Watson.

Johnson is not one to look too far ahead, but it is clear he is emerging as the man to beat. "This is a big one for me, and it gives me a lot of confidence

for the rest of the year," Johnson said. "I feel like the game's in good form right now."

Johnson is taking a fortnight off before The Players Championship, which means Rose, who did not play in Mexico City, will have a golden chance to return to the summit at the Arnold Palmer Invitational.

McIlroy is defending cham-

pion at Bay Hill and is plainly full of self-belief after his third top-five finish in as many starts, despite not having won since that victory 12 months ago.

"My game's right there, I'm really happy with everything," McIlroy said. "I've just got to stay patient, look at the positives and just keep persisting. Sooner or later, it will go my way."

Wacky Awards at Saipan Marathon 2019



Runners dressed as bride and groom compete in last year's Saipan Marathon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

MANTA

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time, 23-29, but managed to regroup in the second half to overtake the Knights and steal the win.

After securing the come-from-behind victory, Saipan Southern kept the division's best record and remained undefeated with its 4-0 mark. Mt. Carmel, on the other hand, absorbed its second loss in five games and is now tied with Agape Christian School 1 for third place behind idle Kagman High School (3-1).

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Sprinter Jacque Wonenberg led NMA's dominance in the NMSA yearly banquet after collecting five Female Student Athlete of the Year awards—the most (student) in CNMI history and she did it in consecutive years. The Marianas High School grad-

The MVA will be looking at the 10K turnaround point for its top choice in each category. Winners will receive prizes from The Athlete's Foot or All-Star Sporting Goods.

As of last week, nearly 750 runners have registered for the race. Registrants can link to online registration via www.mymarianas.com. They can register in the 10K, half marathon, and full marathon courses of MVA's signature event. Runners will receive a finisher's T-shirt, finisher's medal, and entry to the marathon awards banquet at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Saipan Marathon has been certified by the International

Association of Athletic Federations and the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS), making it a qualifying race for the Boston Marathon.

Joining the MVA as exclusive sponsors of this year's marathon are Skechers, Powerade, and Northern Marianas Athletics.

Platinum sponsors are IT&E, Hyatt Regency Saipan, Joint Marketing, Hotel Association of the Northern Mariana Islands. Gold sponsors are Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, Royal Travel, Saipan Computer Services, Saipan Apparel, and T Galleria by DFS. Silver sponsors

are Grandvrio Resort Saipan, Deen International, The Athlete's Foot, Boarderline, All-Star Sporting Goods, Skydive Saipan, Tokyo Jusen, Subway/Foremost/Coca-Cola, Joeten Shopping Center, and Real Estate Transaction Specialist Igawa Office.

Aid stations will be manned by Hyatt Regency Saipan, Pacific Development Inc., Grandvrio Resort Saipan, Fiesta Resort & Spa, Kanoa Resort, Coca-Cola/Foremost, Pacific Islands Club, Imperial Pacific International (CNMI), IT&E, Aqua Resort Club, Kensington Hotel Saipan, Tasi Tours Transportation, Saipan

SINCLAIR

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ward Look Pro Tennis Classic in Tucson, Arizona and made it to the quarterfinals of the doubles event. Sinclair partnered with Luke Jacob Gamble of the U.S. and they outlasted Australia's Dayne Kelly and Dustry Boyer last Tuesday, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 10-2, to move to the Round of 8. In the quarterfinals today, Sinclair and Gamble are scheduled to take on another Aussie tandem in Thomas Fancutt and James Frawley.

Sinclair also entered the singles event and won the opening set of his match against Japan's Issei Okamura, 7-6 (5) before the latter swept the last two, 6-2, 6-4, to steal the victory.

Arenado, Rockies
reach \$260M,
8-year deal

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Saipan Tribune Sports



Jokic scores
36, powers
Nuggets past
Thunder

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Track stars lead honor roll

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com

Track stars topped Northern Marianas Sports Association's yearly honor roll.

Since NMSA started recognizing athletes in 1980, Northern Marianas Athletics standouts have combined for 29 Male and Female Athletes and Student Athletes of the Year awards to lead swimming, which has earned 24. Zarinae Sapong and Tania Tan are the latest track stars to be acknowledged by NMSA during last week's 2018 NMSA/Tan Annual Sports Banquet at the Hibiscus Hall of the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan with the former bagging her third straight Female Athlete of the Year award and the latter notching her first Female Student Athlete of the Year plum.



"Athletics' success through the years is attributed to commitment—commitment from the athletes and their parents and families, coaches, and the support-

ers of our program, such as the different schools in the CNMI and the private companies here," NMA president Ramon Tebuteb said.

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Sinclair jumps to No. 69 in world rankings



By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's Colin Sinclair made a big leap in the ITF World rankings (singles), moving to No. 69 after his title conquest in the \$15,000 Claremont Club Pro Classic in California early this month.

Sinclair barged into the Top 100 (as of Feb. 25) after earning 100 points for beating Frenchman Lucas Poullain, 6-3, 7-6, in the finals of the hard court tournament played from Feb. 5 to 10. He jumped 60 notches in the leaderboard, as he was at No. 129 before he competed in the M15 event.

The 24-year-old is the lone Pacific Oceania player to make it to the Top 100 and the first to win a singles title in a pro tournament. He worked his way up to the ladder just



The CNMI's Colin Sinclair is now at No. 69 in the World ITF rankings.

two months into the season and after receiving the 2019 International Player Grand Slam Grant from the Grand Slam Development Fund.

After his first singles championship, the Commonwealth player competed in the West-

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ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Coach of the Year Elias Rangamar, fifth left, joins their athlete awardees during the 2018 Northern Marianas Sports Association/Tan Siu Lin Foundation Annual Sports Banquet held last week at the Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan.

Manta Rays edge Knights to keep unbeaten record

By ROBY N. PAMINTUAN
pamintuanrobyn@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Saipan Southern High School rallied past Mount Carmel School 1, 54-48, dur-

ing the boys division game in the 2018-2019 Commonwealth Coalition of Private Schools Association Varsity Basketball League yesterday



at Koblerville Gymnasium.

The Manta Rays were behind at half-

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A Saipan Southern High School player takes off for a shot against a Mt. Carmel School 1 defender during their game in the CCOPSA caging yesterday at the Koblerville Gymnasium.

ROBY N. PAMINTUAN